THE

DOOR OF Heaven

Opened and Shut.

OPENED to the Ready and Prepared.

SHUT against the Unready [illegible]

OR,

A DISCOURSE

Concerning

The Absolute Necessity [illegible] Timely Preparation for [illegible] Eternity.

By *JOHN FOX* Minister of the Gospel, and Author of the Discourse concerning *Time, and the End of Time.*

LONDON,
Printed for *Sam. Speed* at the *New Bell* in *Little Britain*, 1676.

TO THE

Reader

READER,

UPon the often and earnest Desire and Solicitation of some sober Persons, that heard these Sermons Preached, I have adventured to make this Plain Discourse (about Timely Preparation for Heaven) Publick. And if thou art Reconciled to, and really in Love with Truth and Holiness; here is that put into thine Hand, (which if God adde his Blessing) will stir up thy dull Mind to greater seriousness and diligence in the matters of thy Soul. Now that it may conduce to thy spiritual and eternal Advantage, is his Desire who Prayeth for thy Souls welfare,

 J. FOX.

2/6

MAT. 25. 10.

And they that were Ready went in with Him to the Marriage, and the Door was shut.

THE Thing of greatest moment are by most men little believed, less considered, till it be too late; That besides this present World, (which must have its period) there is another World of an eternal duration: And that according to our choice, life, and doing here will our doom and eternal habitation be in the World to come; so that there is an indispensible Necessity to make ready for a blessed Life of Immortality. This grand Concern, the Parable of the ten Virgins warns and alarums us unto. In which Parable are two parts.

First, the Churches Preparation to meet Christ, called here *The Bridegroom*, from the first to the fifth verse.

Secondly, *the Bridegroomes coming forth to meet them*, from the fifth to the twelfth

verse. The Text falls under the second part, viz. *The Bridegroomes coming to fetch home his Bride*: O welcom day! The words serve as a Glass or bright Sun-beam, to represent the different estate of believers and unbelievers, wise and foolish Virgins, at Christs coming by Death or Judgement.

In which observe three things.

1. The preparation of the wise Virgins, *They were ready.*

2. Their Welcom and Admission to the Marriage, *They went in with him*, i. e. *into the Presence-Chamber of the King of Glory.*

3. We have the doleful Rejection and Exclusion of the foolish Virgins, *And the Door was shut.*

The Doctrine that I shall Collect and Handle from the words is this, *They and only such who are graciously qualified and prepared for Christ in this World, shall enjoy eternal Fellowship and Communion with Christ in the other World.*

The greatest part of our happiness that we shall have in Heaven lies in this, *That we shall be with Christ.* Dost thou desire a better Countrey?

Countrey? *viz.* *to come safe to Heaven*: Keep thine eye ever upon thine end, and know that here life is gotten or lost to Eternity. Sinner, do not deceive thy self, to hope for Heaven, and do the work of Hell: if thou dost expect to go in with Christ, and enjoy God and glory hereafter, daily use the means, and go in the way to Heaven here. There is a congruity between the way and the end: They answer one another, as face answereth face in the water; or as the Wax and the Seal, the Voice and the Ecchodo answer eachother. If thy heart and life cry Heaven, Heaven, then thy End or Death will cry Heaven; but if thy Life and Practice cry hell, hell, thine End like the Ecchо to the Voice will cry hell, hell. As men brew they drink, and receive wages according to their work; and as you sowe you reap: the Harvest is the end of the World; they that were ready went in, not one more. Heaven consisteth partly in the fitness and preparation of the soul and body for that blessed Society above. The Paradise of God would be a Prison, may I not say a hell, to the impious and unholy.

Sore eyes cannot behold the Sun without grief; Swine will not stay in the most plea-

sant Meadows: hence, no work so irksom as Christs, no time so uncomfortable and tedious to wicked men, as abiding under Christs wings in his Ordinances.

Before I proceed to speak to the several branches in the Doctrine, I must enter a Caveat or Caution.

First, this Meetness, Fitness, and Preparation for Heaven, is not to be understood in a way of Popish Purgation or Merits, *viz.* by *Prayers, Acts of Munificence, Almes, Pilgrimages, Penance, Purgatory, &c.* The Reward is of Grace, not of Debt, or Desert, for *all our Righteousnesses are but as filthy rags; and when we have done all we are but unprofitable Servants* (saith our Saviour,) *Isa.* 64.6. *Luke* 17 10. Our good hope and everlasting consolation is through grace.

Secondly, the readiness is not to be understood, as if all that shall go to Heaven with Christ, have an inherent, sinless, and personal Perfection; As Stars have their twinklings, and Diamonds their flaws, and the best Gold doth need some grain of allowance, so the most eminent Christians have their frailties and mixtures of corruption. *Solomon* challengeth the whole world, when he saith, *Who can say I have made my heart clear, I am pure from*

from my sin? 'Tis true, *there is a generation pure in their own eyes, yet are not washed from their filthiness,* Prov. 30. 11. Such were the Pharisees, and some Perfectionists of this our age; whereas the Life of the most holy Man in the World, is not as a Garden without weeds, this is reserved for Heaven. And if none die comfortably, or go in with Christ, but those who have lived perfectly, then every man must go out of the World with despair and terrour; for the failings of Gods People are more then their duties, their corruptions more then their graces: so that whoever goes to Heaven, must be beholding to the redeeming blood, and justifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus. This being premised, I shall proceed to the Explanation of the Doctrine, in which I shall observe this Order and Method.

First shew, *That there is a Fitness and Preparedness in Believers for their future state of blessedness.*

Secondly, *That this Fitness is in the day and time of Life, not after Death.*

Thirdly, *What this Fitness for Christ and Heaven is.*

Fourthly, *I shall give the Reasons upon which all must prepare, and why none else must go in with Christ.*

Fifthly, *Improve all in several Uses.*

SECT. I.

First, That Believers are divinely qualified for their state of Blessedness; being a People made ready and prepared for the Lord, Luke 1.17. That those wise Virgins are fit and accounted worthy to go in with Christ, will appear three ways.

First, by their intrinsecal Endowments and Qualifications, or what God hath done in them.

Secondly, by the choice Epithites and Titles given to them.

Thirdly, their Priviledges and Regalities with which they are invested and ennobled.

First, their inward Frame and Constitution doth exceed the whole World. There is most rare, curious and inimitable work of the Divine Spirit upon the souls of all that shall go in with Christ. *Believers are his Workmanship; They are renewed in the Spirit of their mind, and have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. They are holy Brethren, Partakers of the heavenly Calling, and a divine Nature, and transformed and changed from glory to glory into the same*

same Image. They are said *to be called to Glory and Vertue*, and the life they live is called *the Life of God*, and their conversation is said *to be in Heaven*, Eph. 2. 10. Eph. 4 23, 24. Heb 3. 1. 2Pet. 1. 4. 2Cor. 3. 17.

Secondly, their Titles do speak their Fitness; They are called, *the Children of the Bride-chamber, Children of the Kingdom, Children of the Resurrection, Christs fair One, the Kings Daughter, Gods Jewels, his peculiar Treasure, his excellent Ones, such of whom the World is not worthy.*

What is the chaff to the Wheat, or pebbles to Pearls, or clods of Earth to the bright Stars, or the children of hell to these earthly Angels. The Name of a Christian is a most honourable Name. *Alexander* thought himself happy that he might be named *Achilles*, and *Cæsar* if he might be called *Alexander*. The Believers Name is of greater Renown. *Solon* was called *the Wonder of* Greece, *and the Glory of the* Greeks, but he was not to compare with the meanest Saint. *Constantius* and *Valentinian*, two famous Emperours, called themselves *Vassallos Christi*, the Vassals of Christ; and *Theodosius* another Emperour professed, *It was more honour to him, to be* Membrum Ecclesiæ quàm Caput Imperii,

a Member of the Church, then Head of the Empire.

Thirdly, their Priviledges also do evidence this Fitness, which are all Royal.

First, they have a Royal Descent, and so the Sons and Daughters of the Lord God Almighty, *My First-born*, saith the Lord of *Israel* of his people. We read of the children of base men, viler then the Earth, *Job* 30. 8. *Jezabel* is called a cursed woman, though a Kings Daughter. *Nebuchadnezzar* is called an abominable branch, and *Antiochus Epiphanes*, a vile person. Believers are of God, and born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of men, but from above, *John* 3.

Secondly, Moreover they have a Royal Spirit. *Nebuchadnezzar* told *Daniel*, *In him was the Spirit of the holy Gods*. *Joshua* and *Caleb* (that entred into the holy Land) were men of another spirit, *Numb.* 14. 24. This Spirit that fits them for Heaven is a holy Spirit, *Rom.* 1. 4. *A Spirit of Grace*, *a Spirit of Glory*, 1 Pet. 4. 14. So called, because it comes from the God of Glory, and prepares them for Glory.

Thirdly, they have Royal Offices, and are employed about Royal business. They are

Kings

Kings and Priests, whose Employment is Prayer and divine praise, *Rev.* 1.6. *Psal.* 6. 24. 1 *Pet.* 2 5,9.

Fourthly, they have Royal Attendants, the glorious Angels; these Watchers, who are great in strength, stand as Sentinels at their doors to protect their Persons, day and night while they live: And they must convey their souls thorough the Devils Territories safe to the Place of their everlasting habitation, after they are dead, *Psal.* 34. 8. *Heb.* 1. 14. *Luke* 16. 22. If you are by Grace prepared for Glory, God is your God, and this is your Guard.

Fifthly, they have a Royal Law, which is the Rule and Standard of their Obedience to God, *Jam.* 2. 8. The Writing was the Writing of God, who was both the Dictator and the Scribe, *Exod.* 32. 16. where note, that the Scripture is the Word of God, *John* 10.35.

Sixthly, they have Royal Apparel, a Royal presence, and belong to a Royal City: and when they go in with Christ, they shall be on the Throne-Royal, and have the Crown-Royal.

It cannot be denied, but that they are set apart for God, and fitted for his Presence.

Psal.

Psal. 4. 3. *God hath set apart the man that is godly for himself.* Mirè segregavit cum indicio excellentiæ, (*Iaith one upon the Place*) God hath gloriously, wonderfully, miraculously separated to himself the godly man. Here Note,

That we do not make our selves fit, or meet for Heaven, God must do it. *Who can make his heart clean?* we may wash the out-side of the Cup, God must cleanse that which is within, *viz.* the heart, from wickedness. *I am the Lord that healeth thee.*

Christians are made fit by Redemption, by Vocation, by Adoption, by Justification, by Sanctification.

This should cause the godly to wonder at the Power of Divine Grace. If a King cast his favour on a mean subject or slave, and prefer him to a great and honourable Office, yet he cannot change his nature, and give him fitness for that place: But God doth not only give a Kingdom to his Saints, but inwardly adapt, and fit them for that Kingdom. And as none had right to the Land of *Canaan* but the *Israelites*, so none have right to Heaven but the Saints; (but of this more afterwards).

SECT.

SECT. II.

Secondly, *This Readiness is in the day and time of Life, not after death. Oh that thou hadst known in this thy day* (said Christ to the Jewes) *the things that belong to thy peace.* There is a time known and appointed of God, after which they shall never repent and be converted, who have enjoyed and lived under the means of grace, and are not converted. 'Tis true, the eternal God is not limited to any term or means, but man is limited to time and means. Sinner, thou hast a great work to do, a long journey to go, and many and mighty adversaries to divert and hinder thee; thy VVork is to prepare for Death and Judgment, which [illegible] near; thy Voyage or Journey is to [illegible] everlasting VVorld, Provision must be made while in the way. To apply this a little, and to quicken you to husband the precious Talent of Time in order to Eternity. I shall propose three things; First, consider how short and uncertain our being in the VVorld is. Secondly, as life is short, so the continuance of the means of grace will not be long. Thirdly, when gray haires, old age, sickness, (*Solomons*

evil

evil day) comes, that is not so fit and proper a season to prepare for Heaven? First, remember how short and uncertain thy being in the World is; *Our life is but a vapour*, Jam. 4. 14. that soon appeareth and disappeareth, dispersed assoon as raised. 'Tis a little spot of time between two Eternities. One of the Ancients doubteth, whether to call it a dying life, or a living death: And if our life (which is a breathing death) had bin less then a vapour, it had bin nothing at all. The Psalmist describes Man as *Grass*, Psal. 90. *In the Morning it flourisheth, in the Evening it is cut down, and withereth.*

Man continueth but a very short time, his life is but a span long, or but a day long, like *Jonah*'s Gourd, came up in a night, and perished in a night. The first step man sets upon the stage of this World, he is going out of the World. The Naturalists speak of a Fly they call *Ephemeron*, a creature of one day, which cometh forth in the Morning, is very active about Noon, but when the Sun declineth, it declineth too, and sets with the setting of the Sun.

Man is an *Ephemeron*, a creature of one day. The Ancient of days sets up our Glass in Heaven, there it is running, and we see not how

how it hastens to an end. Think, O do you soul, of the fugacity and swiftness of thy time here below, the Line and Lease of Life will quickly be out: It is but a point of time that we live, while we do but turn, Immortality is present. This present Life is but the place of our Inne and Sepulchre; The Beginning of this Life is but the *Exordium* of Death, *Vitæ hujus Principium statim Mortis est Exordium.* We are carried every moment of time to the *End of Time.* Our Life is but like one sailing; he who doth sail, whether he stand or sit, whether he sleep, watch or walk, he is carried nearer the Port; may we not say with old *Jacob*, Gen. 47. 9. *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been*: where we have his Account cast up; God is the great Landlord of our time, the Lease is for life, not years but days, not many days but few. *Life* (said one) *is a Rose, which if we view in its growth the Cold nips it, the Heat withers it, the Wind shakes it, be it never so fair it withers*: Another saith, *Life is a counterfeit, what if the Colours be fair, and the Resemblance near, the Shadows of Death, and the Curtains of the Grave will darken all*; 'Tis a Play, We enter at our Birth, and Act all our Life, presently there is an *Exit*, or end,

and

Life, he shews himself a little, and hides himself again, his meaning was this, Our Life is but a little shew, no sooner are we seen, but immediately we are hid and gone. O sleepy and secure sinner, think of the certainty of Death, the danger of thy Soul, the nearness and length of Eternity, and the Necessity of preparing in a moment of time for an everlasting estate. Die and leave the VVorld we must, in the Grave there is no work, after Death the Judgement, *Heb.*9.27. Sin poisons the Arrow in the Quiver of the King of Terrours, and puts the Sythe into Deaths hand that cuts us down. Methinks Sin speaks to the several Generations of men whom Death hath conquered, as *David* to the Priest who had escaped *Sauls* bloody sword, *I have been the occasion of all this.* Sin and Death are coupled together, *Rom.*8.2.

Secondly, as Life is short, so the continuance of the means of Grace will not be long. There are many faithful, able, painful Ministers have Preached their last; and an abundance, yea, multitudes of Sinners, time-lo'ers, that have heard their last; and this will be my case and yours in a little time. The Prophets, do they live for ever?

We

We have but a little time to intreat and to treat with you about your souls, to call, invite and perswade you to come to Christ, and accept of mercy: and which Minister or Sermon shall be the last thou shalt hear, who can tell? *There are six days*, said the Master of the Synagogue, *Luke* 13. *in which men ought to work, in them therefore come and be healed. We must seek the Lord while he may be found*, Isa. 55. 6. *For behold now is the appointed time, now is the day of salvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 1. Moreover, as the Ministry and outward means is uncertain, so the time of the Spirits working with the Word is uncertain, *My Spirit shall not always strive with man*: the Spirit is compared to the Wind, who can tell when the Wind will blow, and how long it will continue its sweet gales to convey us to glory. The Door of grace is yet open to lost and undone sinners, who have slighted mercy. God did not deal so with the Angels that fell, they sinned, and the Lord cast them down, and shut the Gate of Glory upon them immediately. But the day for the things of thy peace is continued. Its said, the Devil is busie because his time is short. *Rev.* 12. 12. And shall we be worse then the Devil? The time is short, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29. *The Angel*

are long swear by him that liveth that time shall be no more. You that are travelling towards Heaven must make haste, the Workman that sets a time for his task, listens to the Clock, and counts the houres. We have a great task and a short time, redeem it in order to Eternity. This is Gods houre, and this is mine; what I do for my dear soul, what I lay up for Eternity must be now done or never. O remember, its but an houre, but a day, and this will quickly pass away. In what anguish of soul, despair and torment, will many wish for those houres again! the loss of so many opportunities for the gaining of Heaven, will be as so many drops of gall and poison in thy honey. *It makes me weep,* said one, *when my Hour-Glass is beside me, to see every speck of sand to follow other so speedily;* therefore the Apostle exhorts *to Redeem time; Must work,* said our dear Lord, *while it is day,* John 9.4. Sinner, if Death should come, and find thee unready, thou art undone soul and body for ever.

The time of gray Hairs, old Age, Sickness, is not the fittest season to prepare for Heaven. When thou comest to a Bed of Languishing, and thy strength wasted, thy breath short, dost thou think to Cough up, *Lord have mercy*

upon

upon my Soul, and that will be sufficient to prepare thee for Christ, and bring thee to Heaven. Besides, it is almost a wonder to hear of any one converted to God at the last gasp, when men are ready to enter into the Gulf of Eternity. In the Word we have one only instance of the Thief upon the Cross; but remember his Conversion was one of the Wonders of Christs Passion; when Christ was on the Cross, the Sun was darkned from the sixth houre to the ninth houre, the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain, the Earth did quake, the Rocks rent, the Graves opened, the Bodies of Saints which slept arose, and a notorious sinner was converted, all which is wonderful. *Austin* being sent to give his judgement of one that had delayed, and put off his repentance, returned this Answer, *Non dico damnabitur, non dico salvabitur*, I do not say he shall be damned; I do not say he shall be saved, but repent while it is well; Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation may depend upon this day. *Tamerlain*, when he laid siege to a City or Fort, first Erected a white Flag, thereby offering Peace; the second a Red, to signify blood; thirdly, he shewed them a black Engine, denoting devastation and destruction: The Holy Ghost saith, *To day if*

you

such a day; the Night before a Friend sent him a Letter to acquaint him with it; but being at supper and busie, *I will not look upon it now*, (saith he) *to morrow it a new day*: The next day when he should have read the Letter he was stabbed. God sends thee a Letter, a Message from Heaven, *To day hear his voice*, to day repent and leave thy sins, or for ever to Hell.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, *Let us now enquire what this Preparation to go in unto Christ is.* And I wish that all who read this Discourse may understand it, not onely notionally and speculatively, but also heartily and experimentally.

In Answer to this third particular, here is something Negatively, and something Positively, and both in reference to believers and unbelievers.

Negatively, Preparation for Christ and Heaven, doth not lie or consist in any thing that is natural, or acquired by mans utmost industry. Let the Qualifications, Endowments, Emprovements and Attainments of Men be never so rare and excellent, while without

and eternal fellowship with God. To explicate this, take these four Particulars.

First, Readiness for Christ and Heaven doth not consist in being Virgins, and Church-Members, and in having the specious leaves of Profession. There are more then a few who pretend to and profess the true Religion, that are carnal, rotten and false in that Religion: All in the visible Church, that are sealed with the Sign and Sacrament of Initiation, are not made fit for divine Communion. *Nicodemus* was circumcised, yet not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. *Judas* was an Apostle and Preacher, but the son of perdition: *Simon Magus* was baptized, and in the gall of bitterness.

Many think, 'tis sufficient to save them, that they were born in *England*, and descended of Religious or Protestant Parents, that they keep their Church, say their Prayers, receive the Lords Supper, and procure their absolution when dying: The unbelieving *Jews* gloried in their External Rites and Priviledges, crying out, *The Temple of the Lord &c.* and because they had them

Priests, and Sacrifices and could go up to *Jerusalem* to worship, they were (as they thought) the happiest people in the whole world. How many Atheists and haters of God and Holiness, have been Baptized? Rest not here; for he is not a *Jew* that is one outwardly, *Rom.* 2. 28. *Gal.* 6. 13. God calls the Circumcised *Israelites Kine of* Bashan, *and the Children of the* Ethiopian, *Am.* 4. 1, 9, 7.

2. Neither doth it consist in trimming of *Lamps, i. e.* in External duties and Religious Acts, which to the view of the world may be splendid and very plausible. *Bona opera non faciunt bonum virum, sed vir bonus facit opera bona. Luther.* Good works do not make a good man, but a good man makes good works. Unregenerate men their services proceed from the same principle that their sins do. The Tree must be good before the fruit can be good, the outside of the cup or platter may be clean; men may hear the word gladly, so did *Herod*, and pray frequently, so did the *Pharisees*, and those Hypocrites, *Isaiah* 58. Men may receive the Lords Supper, so did *Judas*, and do much more, and yet be far from the Kingdom of heaven: More-

over

over they may be exact in their second table duties, wrong no man, be just and Righteous, give unto *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsars*, (so were some of the Heathen) and yet be strangers to God, the new Birth, Union and Communion with Christ, without which no man can be capacitated, and prepared for the divine presence.

3ly, Neither doth this readiness for Christ lie in being of such a party, and opinion, or in being hot and zealous for such modes and forms of Religion and Worship: A man may be Episcopal, a Presbyterian, an Independent, an Anabaptist, and a stranger to the life and power of Religion. The *Jews*, High Priests, and Elders: the Scribes and Pharisees were zealous for *Moses* Law, the Custom and Traditions of their Fathers, but the worst Enemies Christ had. The Prelate of *Rome* sticks not to impose on and Depose Princes, and their bloody deluded Vassals can murder & shed the blood of *Protestants* out of cruel religious zeal.

4ly, Neither doth it lie in mental Illumination and excellent rare parts, gifts, common grace, and good opinion, and approbation of the best, most serious and judicious men; A Mans Mind and In-

tellectuals may be Adorned with rare Notions: He may be able to dispute most readily, accurately and profoundly about Theological principles; he may Pray and Preach like an Angel, & be in high esteem in the Church; and yet have nothing in him to Intitle him to Christ, and prepare him for heaven. There is shining dross and counterfeit Silver which deceiveth many, as a *Bristol* Stone may shew and shine like a Diamond, and a Counter like piece of Gold; the Picture of a man may be like a man, and Artificial Flowers are as fair, and look like Natural Flowers; so common grace hath the resemblance of saving Grace; So that some question whether it differs in Specie or degrees only. There are partial and almost Christians, who seem to bid fair for Christ and Heaven, as *Judas*, *Demas*, and many others. And who can tell how high and eminent men may be in office and profession, how sound and orthodox in Judgment and opinion, how deep in Conviction and Contrition, how regular in Conversation, how zealous, and warm in Affection, how forward in duties of Piety and Charity, and ready to suffer, how lifted up with airy titilla-

titillations of Joy, sips and tasts of comfort resulting from thoughts of free grace, and misapplying the promises, and the superficial transient operations of the Spirit; And but halve it with God, and fall short of Heaven: How much alike were these Virgins (to say nothing of their Agreement in number and name) they were all in society, they were all asleep, they were all awakened and rowsed up, they all went to work and trim'd their Lamps, they all went out to meet the Bridegroom: and the foolish came to the door with *Lord, Lord, open to us*: If good words, and wishes, and *O let me die the Death of the Righteous* will save men, they would all go to heaven. Many spin small and make hypocrisie seem a good Web, and go through the Market as Saints among men; and yet steal quietly to hell without Observation: *So easie it is to deceive men* (said an eminent Divine) *'Tis doleful to think and see such Troopes and Droves of prophane, ignorant, presumptuous men and women, go down merrily to hell, with a golden dream and hope of Heaven:* Like the Fish that sport and play in *Jordan*, and then fall into the dead Sea; like *Haman* that went chearfully to *Hesters* Banquet, not

knowing his life was the mark that she Aim'd at: How many secure souls asleep in sin go out of the world, and never awake till they come to hell.

Having spoken something in the Negative concerning this fitness and readiness for Christ. I proceed now to the positive part of my Answer, wherein it doth consist.

1. There is an initial, or an habitual readiness for heaven, and there is also a more actual fitness to go in with Christ.

As soon as a man is taken out of his natural soil, and the seed of God is sown in his heart, he is habitually ready for his future happiness. If a Beliver should die the first day of his Conversion, he would certainly go to Heaven, witness the Thief upon the Cross. But truly there are many dear Children of God not actually prepared, because their spiritual estate is not so well setled. 'Tis a great duty for all that are espoused to Christ, to be in a constant and continual readiness to meet Christ, and have immediate Communion with him: but sad experience proves it is not so. A Woman may be espoused to another, and yet she may be sometimes not ready to meet him; her Ornaments may

be

be off, and her foul apparel on. To Resolve this I shall shew.

First, when the Christian is not ready.

Secondly, when he is actually ready.

First, when the Believers soul, like *Hezekiah*'s Sun, is gone some degrees backward, *i. e.* under remarkable declinings; And the best things in him are ready to die, *viz.* grace, inward joy, peace, old experiences, godly sorrow are ready to die. If the first warm, burning, flaming love of the Espousals be lessned, and much abated towards Christ, so that the Mans heart doth vigorously go forth after sensual Objects, and the dead child is put in the place of the living child; is he fit to go in with Christ? If Grace be under remarkable decays and witherings, and the Souls Beauty departed, Can a Man then welcome Christ? What cause have thousands to cry out with the Prophet, *My leanness; my leanness:* Is it not Autumn or Winter in many a soul? How little life and love have you, and much ado to maintain it. I heard a good Woman, in a dispairing condition, complain of want of natural affection to her Husband and Children. And may we not with holy *Bradford* weep for want of love to

out dearest Lord, and embracing the bosom of a stranger. If the Wives affection be withdrawn from her Husbands Person, is she fit now to appear before him, when she hath no heart to receive him? Therefore strengthen the things that are ready to die, blow up the spark of love into a flame, and thou mayst say, *Come, Lord Jesus.*

Secondly, when the poor Christian, being under desertion, is doubtful of his eternal condition, and cannot tell what will be his place, when he leaves the World he is ashamed; when thick Mists surround us, and black Clouds cover us, the many sinking fears, jealousies and damping doubts about the love of Christ renders us unready. This is the case of many a soul who hath made choice of God to be his, and wonders at his love to him, yet is ready to speak as the Church, *Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me,* Isa. 49. 14. *My soul is cast down,* saith *David, within me, all his billows pass over me, hath God forgotten to be gracious.* I doubt my heart is not upright, that my foundation is not sound, that I shall be shut out of Heaven, saith the desponding soul. *Hezekiah,* though he walked before God with a perfect

feel heart, yet bitterly complained that it was cut off. A very holy and learned Minister complains thus, *I have often disputed whether or no I knew any thing of Christianity, except the letter of the Name.*

The Woman in Mr. *Bolton* said, *I have bin the Mother of Nine Children, and have born them with as much pain as most Women, yet I could be contented to bear the same pain every day, that I have endured with all my Children, to be assured of my Part in Christ.* Another cried out, *He could be contented that his body should burn in Hell a thousand years, so that he might be assured of the least favour from God afterwards. And will you not pity me,* saith Mrs. *Drake, that must burn in Hell for ever?* Sirs, in a time of desertion, when God hides his face, and Heaven is out of sight, the Child of Light walks in darkness, the soul is not ready. The thoughts of God are terrible. *I remembred God, and was troubled,* saith *David, I sink, the deep waters are come into my soul. The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrours of God do set themselves in array against me,* Job 6. 4. *O pity me my friends,* Job 19. Another walking in the Fields

(seeing a Fly) cried out, *This Fly comes armed with the wrath of God against me.* Now when the trembling soul apprehends it self to hang like an equal ballance between two Eternities, and cannot tell whether he shall go up or down, live or die, be saved or damned; he is not fit to shoot the Gulf: This made *David* pray, *Psal. 39. ult. Spare me a little before I go hence and be no more.*

Here Note, That there is a double Desparation, *A Desperation of Infidelity*, and *A Desperation of Extremity:* The former, *viz.* A total and perpetual Desperation, none of Gods Elect ones shall fall under: but the latter, the Desperation of Extremity, (which doth cure their stupidity, and provoke and prompt them to the use of the means) they are obnoxious to: They are sometimes brought very low in their souls: *Luther*, by reason of the trouble of his mind, wisht he had never bin a man. The Christian sits solitary as a Widow forsaken, his sighs are many, and his heart is faint, when God covers himself with a Cloud. This made a godly Woman dying (whose Evidences for Heaven could not be read) pray, *Lord, let me not go to*

the

the Place where the wicked are, for I never loved them in my life.

Thirdly, after ſome ſad fall, and when a man is under ſome violent temptation, or paſſion, he is unready. A good man may be under the power of ſome ſudden, hot and ſinful paſſion, and aſſaulted with an helliſh temptation, he may be tempted to curſe and blaſpheme God, to deſtroy himſelf; he may be bereaved of his Reaſon and Underſtanding, and be ragingly mad: Paſſion is the Law of the ſoul; and *brevis inſania*, a ſhort madneſs. *Job* and *Jeremiah* in their paſſion did both curſe the day of their birth; *Jonas* told God, *He did well to be angry.* Moreover, after a Chriſtian hath fallen into ſome groſs foul ſin, God may frown and write bitter things againſt him, fill his conſcience with terrour, hang him over hell, and threaten to remove him out of his ſight: till he hath renewed his Repentance. A foul fall doth ſo grieve the Spirit, that it may make God carry himſelf towards his as if he were an Enemy. God doth deal with his for their great tranſgreſſions, as *David* with *Abſolom*, who commanded him out of his ſight, 2. *Sam.* 14. 24. In this ſad and deplorable caſe

eaſe, Evidences for heaven are blurred, and all old Experiences of the Love and Favour of God are under ground. *David* after his fall was as a dead man, and prayed, *Caſt me not away from thy preſence*, Pſal. 51. 11.

Fourthly, when a Man hath omitted known and commanded duties, let down his Watch, and neglected his Lords Work; and falls a nodding, or into a Lethargy, (as theſe Virgins did) till roufed up with the Cry of Midnight, he is not prepared to go in with Chriſt. If a Mans Conſcience draweth up a black Bill of Indictment againſt him, for the neglect of the moſt weighty and important duties, he is no more fit to meet Chriſt then *Adam* after he had eaten the forbidden fruit, or a Steward who had much betruſted him to improve for his Lords uſe, and had let all ſeaſons go wherein he might have Traded and gain'd ſomewhat for him. How can he appear before him when no fair account may be ſeen; ſo the Lord hath intruſted thee with many Talents, Grace, Parts, Time, Strength, Health, Means, &c. And you are not Lords but Stewards of all theſe: How can you with comfort and confidence ſtand before Chriſt, if that be neglected.

O thus it is with many a Christian, who hath lost that vigour, zeal, activity and forwardness for the Work of God that once he had. Hence come those sad Alarms, stings and convictions of Conscience, shakings and sinkings of spirit under the sense of guilt.

And is not this the case of many Virgins? so that if Christ should arrest, and summon them by death, and call them to *reddere rationem*, give an Account, how many must Answer *Not ready Lord, my work is not done.* O then betimes do your work, and set things right in your souls every day.

Secondly, *When is a Christian actually ready?*

Answ. A Christian is actually ready when he hath those rare and gracious qualifications of the wise Virgins, (*viz.*) his Vessel clean, and the Oyl in his Lamp and Vessel, *i. e.* The Spirit of Christ and the graces of the Spirit: which are called Rowls of Jewels, Chains of Gold, and Rivers of Living Water. This is the Anointing, 1 *John* 2. 27. That Oyl upon *Aarons* Head which ran down to the Skirts of his Garment: Christ the Head of Influences (of whom *Aaron* was a Type) was Anoint-

ed:

ed above his Fellows, and of his fulness Saints receive grace for grace, *John* 1.

But more particularly,

First, When a Christian (being past from nature to grace) can prove by the Word that infallible truth, that he is in a state of Salvation, and hath therefore good hope, through grace, that his soul is safe.

When *Noah* was shut up in the *Ark* he was out of danger, and prepared for the deluge, and could not be drowned, &c.

When a Believer is gotten into Christ, he hath shot the Gulf, and cannot be damned, *Rom.* 8. 1. If thine affection be espoused to the Lord Jesus, and divorced from all others, so that thou hast accepted him for thine Husband, and given him thine heart, thou canst not fall short of heaven, or miss of going in with Christ. Sinner, do not count upon a Kingdom of Glory and eternal Salvation, without a sound Conversion. Read what Christ spake to his own Disciples, *Mat.* 18. 3, *Verily, I say unto you, except you be Converted you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* What more plain then the Doctrine Christ Preach'd to *Nicodemus*, *Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God,*

In

he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; *John* 3. 3. Why then ſhouldſt thou hope, and expect to enter into Life, who doſt hide and harbour Gods Enemies, and art yet in thy ſins. Chriſtian, hath thy renewed heaven-born-ſoul the Impreſs of the Divine Image on it? *Ceſars* Coin had *Ceſars* Image; Is holineſs to the Lord engraven upon the heart? Haſt thou that divine drop that can ſwim againſt the Stream of corrupt nature? God is reſolved that not one grain of ſaving Grace ſhall go to Hell: Certainly, thou art a choſen Veſſel and ready, when ever Chriſt ſhall call to go in with him to the Marriage. The riches of Glory are the inheritance of the Saints, and if thou haſt a mind to ſee the very Picture of the inviſible God, look upon a pious, humble, holy man; There is a reſplendent beauty on the Believer, no Son ſo much like a Father, no Daughter ſo like her Mother as the Saint is like God. What is brave Silken habit upon the body, Earings, Jewels, upon the Neck, Plaited-Hair, Curls, Towers, Spots, and Paints on the face and forehead, to a Sanctified holy heart. The Church is glorious within, there is that in the Chriſtian (*viz.* the new Creature) that can call

God

God Father; Holiness is the Arms of heaven, the Harbinger of heaven; we may see the harvest of glory in the seed of grace. Grace is glory in its nonage, and glory is grace grown up to its perfect stature! The time cannot be long between a Christians Conversion and his Coronation.

Secondly, When a believer is gotten into the suburbs of Glory by Communion with God, and his heart is sincerely set to please and honor him; when it is thus, he may say with *Jacob, this is no other but the house of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven.* This near Acquaintance and Communion with Christ, and conformity to Christ, must make us ready. Canst thou take the greatest complacency in pleasing God, and say of it as the Martyr, of his prison, *This is better then any Pleasure, then any Paradise*, I pronounce thee ready for the divine Presence. When a man hath a single eye to make Gods Glory his mark, and is sometimes taken into the mount of divine Communion, he is certainly prepared for the vision and eternal fruition of God above. But on the contrary, if thou art a stranger to God, and unacquainted with Christ, and the fellowship of the Spirit, he will say to thee at the

last

last day, as to the unready foolish Virgins *I know you not*, *Mat.* 25. 12. What I shall say more to this question shall be in the Application.

SECT. IV.

The fourth Branch of the Doctrine assigns, and shews *the Reasons why those that are ready shall go in with Christ.* Upon which the necessity of our preparing will plainly appear.

The Reasons respect God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Spirit, and Believers themselves.

The Reasons that respect God, are, 1. From the eternal purpose of God. 2. From the pure Love of God. 3. The sure Promise of God.

2. From Christ. 1. His Relation to them. 2. His Obligation to them. 3. His Prayer for them. 4. The Dignity and honour of Christ.

3. From the Spirit. 1. The Sanctification of the Spirit. 2. The habitation of the Spirit.

4. From Believers, and the right that they have to heaven. 1. They have a purchased

chaſed right. 2. An hereditary right. 3. A right of fitneſs.

1. This divine qualification of Saints for heaven is from the purpoſe of God, which is as unalterable as God himſelf. Immediate Communion with God in heaven is that happy and ſublime End Believers are appointed unto, Faith, Repentance, and an innocent pious life of conformity to God, is the direct way and means to come to, and obtain that end. The way to the Temple of Honour, is through the Temple of Vertue.

He that aſcends the holy hill of God muſt have clean hands. Man by nature is in a corrupt and curſed State of Damnation: and not only disjoyned from God, but Alienated from God, and there can be no fellowſhip without friendſhip. Man hates God in his heart, and two cannot walk together until they be Agreed, *Amos* 3. God and ſin cannot be together, if ſo, the Lapſed Peccant Angels might have ſtayed in Heaven: So then, that which caſt them out muſt needs keep us out. The beſt part of corrupt man is againſt God, his mind is enmity in the abſtract, *Rom.* 8. 7. which notes an exceeding exceſſive enmity;

and

and can there be any familiarity where there is this enmity? Moreover, they that do not prepare for Heaven do not mind Heaven, *Rom.* 8. 5. All their thoughts, projects, designs, delights, do savour of the flesh; Light and Darkness, Fire and Water, Love and Enmity are not more contrary then our dispositions to God: Hence results our misery, to be at odds with our Maker; And can there be any thing more monstrous, then for a creature to oppugn and hate his Creator? And if *Absalom* rise against his father *David*, no wonder he commands him home to his house. But who complains of this rooted enmity to God, which we have caused to bewail in tears of blood. The unholy say to God, *Come not near us, stand by thy self.* And 'tis no wonder if God saith to them, *Depart from me, ye Workers of Iniquity.* But God hath ordained all who shall go in with Christ to Heaven to be holy. *Eph.* 1. 4. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit,* 2 Thes. 2. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 2.

Our effectual Calling, Conformity to the Image of his Son, Justification and Glorification is from Gods Purpose and Predestination

ſtination, *Rom.* 8. 28, 29, 30. Holineſs is, the beaten Road and High-way to our Fathers Houſe: ſo that it will not conſiſt with the purpoſe, honour and holineſs of God to admit unholy Men to Heaven.

2. The prepared ſoul is infinitely and eternally belov'd of God, who hath put his Name in the Book of Life. No heart can conceive or tongue expreſs how dear and precious theſe Jewels, *i. e.* holy Men and Women are to the God of Heaven. To every wiſe Virgin it may be ſaid as to *Daniel*, *A Man greatly beloved*, or as the Angel *Gabriel* ſaid to the bleſſed Virgin, *Mary*, *thou haſt found favour with God*, *Dan.* 10. 11. *Luke* 1. 30. If a man were the Darling of all the Angels, and a Favorite to all the Emperours, Kings and Noble Perſons on the Earth; If all created Beings, *viz.* Heaven, Earth, Sun, Moon and Stars, Fowls, Fiſhes, Beaſts did love him, and rejoyce at his welfare. 'Tis nothing to the favour of God, to have a place in his heart: Gods Love was *Davids* life, *In thy favour is life, and thy loving kindneſs is better than life*, Pſal. 63. 3. *Titus Veſpaſian* was ſtiled *Deliciæ humani generis*, the delight of Mankind: but the

Be-

Believer is the Delight of God, his *Jedidiah*; *Abraham* was God's Friend and Favourite, St. *Paul* wrote to all in *Rome* beloved of God, *Rom.* 1. 7. Christian, trace and follow the Chrystal stream of Divine Grace (which laid the foundation of thine eternal happiness) and thou shalt find it in the heart of God. But we are like men that look on the River *Nilus*, and gaze wondrously on the streams, remain still ignorant of the Head and Original from whence they issue, *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me*, Isa. 43. 4. John 17. 23. And if it be a Curse to be unready, as those foolish Virgins, who were therefore shut out, it must needs be infinite mercy to be ready. The Apostle makes it the First-fruits of glory, to be ready: To be prepared unto glory is the glory of mercy. *I know not which* (saith a Divine) *is the greatest love, to prepare for glory, or to bring into the actual possession of it.* For Divine Grace so to Metamorphize and transform a Man, as to turn a Lion into a Lamb, a bloody Persecutor into a zealous Preacher, a Devil into a Saint, to make of poi-

sonous

ſonous droſs a veſſel of Gold, and then to fill it with glory, is love with a witneſs, *Luke* 8.2. 1 *Cor.*6. 10, 11. *Auguſtine* made one his ſervant that would have killed him. The great God hath made many ſuch, *Rom.* 5.8. *Col.* 1.21. Mans heart while unregenerated is the worſt part of him, *Jer.* 17.9. For hardneſs 'tis as a ſtone, for darkneſs a dungeon, for filthineſs a dunghill, for abominable wickedneſs and enmity to God an *Epitome* of Hell, ſo that Grace doth precede and prepare for Glory; The ground of all is this, *Thou haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me.*

3. The promiſe of God, who will perform his truth to *Jacob*, and his mercy to *Abraham*, *Mic.* 7. *ult.* The Promiſe hath the ſtrength of God. God hath put all Covenant good for his Servants into Promiſes. The Promiſes are nothing elſe but a Deed of Gift Sealed with the Truth of God; God promiſed to bring his people out of *Egypt* into *Canaan*, and out of *Babylon* to *Jeruſalem*, and he performed it: Heaven is not only a purchaſed poſſeſſion, but a promiſed poſſeſſion. The Promiſes of the Word are either abſolute or conditional, of grace or to grace; To all the Believer is heir by ver-

tue

tue of his part in Christ, in whom all the Promises are Yea and Amen: The Promises of the new Covenant do point at the prepared soul, and they secure God and heaven to us. The Gospel promiseth Eternal Life to every one that Believes, *John 16. 36.* God promised to be the Believers God, to dwell in them, to walk in them, and that he will never, never, never leave them nor forsake them, *2 Cor. 6. 16. Heb. 13. 5.* Not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord your God hath spoken, said *Joshua* to the people, *Josh. 23. 14.* God hath made a promise of a glorious Crown to him that perseveres in grace, *Rev. 2. 10. Mat. 24. 13. Godliness hath the Promise of this life, and that which is to come*; Christians, God that cannot lie, hath promised you heaven, whose Truth and Faithfulness Obliges him to the Performance.

The next Ground and Reason is from Christ, why prepared Souls shall go in with him to the Marriage.

1. His relation to them, which is very near. These ready Virgins are Christs Spouse, and must therefore go in with him to the Mar-

Marriage. Christ the holy Head, and the Church the holy Bride are one, *Heb.* 2. 11. *John* 17. 23. He that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. They are the Lambs Wife. Christ calls Believers his Sister, his Spouse: And there is none so near by Consanguinity as a Sister, none so near by affinity as a Spouse. The Church is the Kings Daughter, and Married to the Kings Son: That which is between Christ and Believers is Mutual. 1. There is a mutual knowledge and acquaintance, *I know my Sheep, and I am known of mine,* Joh. 10. 14. *These have known me,* saith Christ, *John* 17. 25. 2. There is mutual interest and propriety, *Can.* 2. 16. 3. There is mutual love and affection, the Church is set on Christs heart, and Christ on the Believers heart. 4. There is mutual converse and intimacy. 5. Mutual resemblance and likeness, they serve as a Glass to see each other. 6. There is mutual sympathy and compassion. They being thus near and dear to each other, cannot be long apart. Christs heart in Heaven is so set upon his Militant Church on Earth, that he doth long for their company to comfort and chear them: and this he will do in a

little

little time, *behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me.*

2. *Reaſ.* Or ground is from his own Obligation and Perſonal Promiſes, which will be accompliſhed: Chriſt is the faithful and true witneſs, and muſt be as good as his word: he will ſooner deſtroy and Annihilate the World then ſuffer any part of his Word or Promiſe to fail, *Mat.* 5. He told his Diſciples, *He went to Heaven to prepare a place for them*, and he hath taken up the poſſeſſion of it in their behalf, This is ſo certain, that Believers are ſaid to ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus, *Epheſ.* 2. 6. He hath alſo promiſed to come again and receive them unto himſelf, *John* 14. 3. *Where I am* (ſaid our dear and bleſſed Lord) *There ſhall my Servants be.* Every holy man hath heaven and glory in the promiſe of the Goſpel: and that under Chriſts own Hand and Seal. And if with *Peter* ye deſire to know what you ſhall have hereafter to requite all your ſervices, and ſufferings for Chriſt here, He will tell you, *Mat.* 19. 27, 28. *And Jeſus ſaid unto them, verily, I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regenerati-*

on, when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon Twelve Thrones.

3. *Reas.* Christs most excellent Mediatory Prayer before his death, doth assure every Christian indeed that he shall be with him. Christ the great Favorite of heaven was always heard. God could never deny any request that ever Christ made. *Father* (said Christ) *I know that thou hearest me always. I know* (said *Martha* to Christ) *Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee*, Joh. 11. 22. Christians, for the joy of your hearts hear what your dear Lord pray'd for all his Elect. *Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory.* Now, there was the merit of his blood and passion went along with this Prayer, *Joh.* 17. 24. *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*, said Christ to his Father, *Joh.* 17. 4. Moreover, Jesus the great Advocate with the Father appears and pleads in heaven for the same thing every day, and will, till all the Saints come safe to Glory. *He ever liveth to make Intercession for us*, Heb. 7. 25.

4. *Reas.* The honour and dignity of Christ

Christ calls for this readiness, who is the Prince of all the Kings of the Earth: the Unregenerated are without God, and none of Christs. *His Servants you are whom ye obey*, Rom. 6. 16. Wicked men are the Devils Spouse, the men of the Earth are the Worlds Spouse. Justitiaries and the self-Righteous are the Laws Spouse, and it would be a great dishonour for such to go in with Christ. Will any man invite or suffer Toads, Serpents, Vipers, or Devils, to come and abide with him and Lodge in his bosom? Is it fit a man that is Leprous & hath Plague-Sores running on him, should come and stand in the Presence of a Prince? The *Leper* under the Law, though a King, was to dwell alone, the strange Woman in *Moses* time was to have her Hair cut, and Nails pared before she was to come into the Congregation of Gods people, or be Admitted into the Church. Who among the Tents of the Uncircumcised can think of appearing before this Holy God, and not tremble? It was one of the Articles of High Treason brought in against Cardinal *Wolsey*, that he had a stinking Breath, and durst come into the Kings Presence. It will be a dishonour to Christ before Angels

and Men in the Face of the whole World to own those for his, who have the Devils mark on them. Sinner dost thou think to leap into heaven, or come into the Presence of God whose Eyes are Pure, being cloathed with filthy Garments? *Rebeckah* put on her Bracelets and Ornaments, before she came to *Isaac*. Our Lord Jesus would have the Chamber, and the Table Furnish'd, and made ready, where he and his Disciples met to eat the Passover. Preparation is necessary when we come into the outward Court of Ordinances, much more when we are to enter into the Holy of Holies, *viz.* Heaven it self. *Rehoboam* did evil because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 12. 14.

Soul, prepare to meet thy God in Glory, if thou hast any respect to his Honour, and thine Eternal Welfare. God your Father, Christians, hath infinite respect to the Dignity of his Son, and so must we. *Saurus* never kept in his Court any ill disposed persons, and will God tolerate them in his Presence? *Alexander* the Great inviting *Jonathan* the High Priest to his Wedding, commanded that *Jonathan* should be cloathed in Purple, being to sit next to *Alexander*.

It

It is a part of a Princes honour to have his Bride ready Attir'd to welcome and entertain him, when he ſhall return to her: She owes this honour to him, and he exſpects it from her: So the Lord Jeſus deſerves this honour of all his people to be in readineſs for him. Suppoſe theſe Virgins had turned Harlots, and gone a Whoring from him till his very coming, and then had been taken in, what might the World think, doth he love the company of Harlots? Chriſtian, if thy heart go a Whoring from God, after the World and Luſts, it is a diſgrace to the Lord Jeſus: Whereas 'tis for the honour of this great King at the time of Solemnizing the Marriage, for his Wife to make ready, *Rev.* 19. 7. *Be ye alſo ready*, ſaith Chriſt.

The third Ground reſpects the Spirit.

Firſt, The Sanctification of the Spirit.

Secondly, The Habitation of the Spirit.

1. The Sanctification of the Spirit, which hath infuſed his whole Divine Nature through the holy ſoul of the Believer; and though a godly man is not Sanctified

perfectly, yet he is Regenerated and Sanctified in every part, *viz.* Spirit, Soul and Body, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. 1 *Thes.* 5. 23. 2 *Thes.* 2. 13. Saints are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, (*Rom.* 15. 16.) and must to Heaven, *Tit.* 3. 5. *Acts* 26. 18.

Secondly, the Habitation of the Spirit: God hath his upper house and his lower house, the highest Heavens and the lowest hearts: Hear a comfortable word from the Mouth of God, *I will dwell among the Children of* Israel, 1 *King.* 6. 13. Believers are a Habitation of God through the Spirit, *Eph.* 2. *ult.* The heart of an unbeliever is the Devils house, *Mat.* 12. 44. And he that hath the Purity of a Dove will not take up the Lodging of a Devil. And if the heart of a wicked Man be a little Hell, the heart of a holy man is a little Heaven. The Believer hath glory in him, Heaven in him, *The Kingdom of Heaven is within you,* (saith Christ) *ye are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you,* 1 Cor. 3 16. *Origens* father ('tis said) many times uncovered the breast of his son as he lay asleep, and kissed it, as the Temple wherein the Holy Ghost had taken up his Residence: Christians, stand and wonder at

Rom. XV. 16.

at this mercy, and ſay as *Elizabeth*, *Whence is it that the Mother of my Lord ſhould come to me*, or rather my Lord himſelf? *Not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called*, 1 Cor. 1. 26. Under the Law the Lion and the Eagle were paſſed by, and the Lamb and the Dove were choſen. That God ſhould come over the heads of Kings and Queens to viſit thee! O wonderful Condeſcention that God ſhould dwell with us (ſaid a ſerious Perſon) who have not a hole to put our heads in! Thus it is, God hath taken up his reſidence in many a little houſe; The prepared ſoul may ſay of the preſence of the Living and true God, as one ſaid of his *Idols* (who dwelt in a little Cottage) *The Gods are here with me.* But will God in very deed dwell with men on Earth (ſaith *Solomon*) 2 *Chron.* 6. 18. Yea, God by his Word and Spirit doth dwell with men on Earth, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. Where God hath recorded his Name, he hath promiſed to meet his people, and bleſs them, Ex. 20. 24. The Saints who are pure in heart ſee his out-goings in the Sanctuary. *The King is held in his Galleries*, Cant. 7. 5. And they who

meet God and Christ in his lower Galleries of Ordinances, shall ere long meet him in the upper Gallery of glory. *For this we groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our House, which is from Heaven*, 2 Cor. 5. 2.

The fourth Ground respects Gods people, together with the Place into which they are to go with Christ. Those that are prepared by Grace, have an absolute and unquestionable right to the Kingdom of glory, into which no unclean thing shall ever enter. Believers who are holy in heart and life have a threefold right to Heaven.

First, they have a purchased right, and that by the blood of God. The heavenly Inheritance of Gods prepared people is bought with a price, so that what the great Surety, and Captain of our Salvation hath purchased, Gods people shall actually possess: this is most certain, *Acts* 20. 28. 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. *Eph.* 1. 14.

Secondly, they have an hereditary right to Heaven, being of the blood-royal, and born to the Kingdom, *They are not of the world, as I am not of the world*; *He that is born in mine house*, said *Abraham*, *is mine heir*;

heir: every Believer is as *Isaac*, a ſon indeed, an heir of ſalvation, *Rom.* 1. 14. And they have all the right of Inheritance. Chriſtians, you are all the Children of God, and heirs, and Joynt-heirs with Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. 17. This ſhould affect your hearts with infinite delight. The Kingdom wherein *Auguſtus* the Emperour moſt delighted was that which he had by Inheritance.

Thirdly, They have an aptitudinary right, *viz.* a right by way of fitneſs, and this is in the Text, *Thoſe that were ready went in with him to the Marriage.* The Preſence of God and Angels doth not become the unclean: Let mens Pretences and Profeſſion be never ſo fair, without grace there is no glory: The *Rhodians* and the *Lydians* had a Law, *That thoſe ſons which followed not their Fathers in vertue, but lived vitiouſly, ſhould be diſinherited. Without are Dogs*, ſaith St. *John*, *Rev.* 22. 15. The *Iriſh* Air will not brook a Toad or Serpent to breath in it, much leſs will Heaven ſuffer wicked men to live there. Thoſe that will not, cannot pleaſe God, are unfit to appear in his Preſence. Plants and Trees may aſſociate and converſe with beaſts, and

beasts with men, assoon as men with God in Heaven, till they be holy: but believers do please and honour God, and make it their business to do his Will, *They have kept thy Word, I am glorified in them*, saith Christ, *John* 17. *And them that honour me will I honour*, 1 Sam. 2. 30. The well-doers must receive the commendation of *Well done, They that have done good shall come forth to the Resurrection of life*, John 5. 29. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in thorow the Gate into the City*, Rev. 22. 14.

To conclude, all Gods prepared people have now the right of propriety to Heaven, and when they die they shall have right of possession, *This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*, Luke 23. 43. This is that the Saints on Earth breath and pant after, *Phil.* 1. 23. *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.*

SECT. V.

1. *Use.* Must none go in with Christ but prepared souls, and are Gods people ready to go?

1. Then

1. Then Divine Grace in the Saints is wonderfully efficacious. The best of us (like *Joshua* before the Angel) are clothed with polluted garments, and too much unready. Now to adorn and beautifie souls stained and sullied within (in whom there is the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *viz.* an universal defilement) is the highest evidence of the Power and Vertue of the glorious Grace of God. When a Mans heart is moulded and fashioned for God, the Divine Spirit (like the Sword of the Lord and *Gideon*) doth great things, *He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God*, (saith *Paul*) 2 Cor. 5. 5. *Thine Hands have made me and fashioned me*, (said *David*) *I will praise thee, for I am fearfully & wonderfully made, marvellous are thy Works, I am curiously wrought.* If *David* wondred at the Wisdom, Power and Goodness of God in his well-formed comely body, consisting of such various parts and members, how should we stand and wonder at the transforming and renewing mans soul after the Image of God. The Law was written on the two Tables with the Finger of God, and this upon the hidden man of the heart, is also the Lords Work, and

man-

marvellous in our eyes. The Work in the Tabernacle and Temple was rare and curious, but yet not to compare with this of the Holy Ghoſt; It ſhall be ſaid of *Jacob* and *Iſrael*, what hath God wrought, *We are his workmanſhip*, *Eph.* 2. 10. In the great Houſe of God the Church, all are not Veſſels of Gold, and prepared for glory. But we may know what Veſſels are for ſpecial uſe, by their metal and curious engraving on them. Sinner, if thine eyes were open, thou mighteſt ſee Heaven, God and Glory engraven upon every ſuch veſſel of mercy. Moreover, this ſupernatural grace in the heart is not a dead habit, but a living ſpring, which prompts men to duty, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10.

Secondly, Faithful Miniſters (who are Workers together with God, and watch for mens ſouls) muſt vehemently urge the neceſſity of Faith, Repentance and Holineſs, without which none are ready, or can poſſibly be ſaved; There is a ſpiritual Lethargy ſeiz'd upon the Chriſtian World: *they all ſlumbred and ſlept*. How ſtirring in our Miniſtry muſt we be to awaken men out of this ſtupor and ſecurity, and to fit them for Heaven. The Scripture hath its

ſting,

ſting, and its honey; there is Mount *Ebal* and Mount *Gerizim*, the Rod as well as the *Mannah*; the Arrow of Repentance muſt be levelled at the heart, and we ſhould deliver the whole Councel of God. *The Word that I ſhall ſpeak, that thou ſhalt ſpeak*, ſaid the Angel to *Balaam*, *Numb.* 22. 35. Chriſts Embaſſadors have their Authority and Commiſſion from God and his Word, and therefore they muſt be plain, particular and piercing in their Preaching, otherwiſe the blood of never-dying ſouls will lie at their door: The Word of God like a well-drawn Picture, looks right upon every one: and what we find in Sacred Writ we muſt preach, pleaſe or diſpleaſe. Is not this written in the New Teſtament, *that he that believes ſhall be ſaved, and he that belives not ſhall be damned*, Mark 16. 16. *He that believeth not ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*, John 3. laſt. Men muſt be turned from darkneſs to light, from the Power of Satan to God (which is the chief end of Preaching) before they can receive the Inheritance among them that are ſanctified by faith in Chriſt, *Acts* 26. 18. You muſt turn or die, repent or periſh, be in tears or flames, be holy or ne-

ver see Gods Face in Glory, *Luke* 13. 5. *Heb.* 12. 14. Happy are they that live under a Ministry who have will and skill to prepare souls for Heaven. Particular Preaching is penetrating and profitable, 2 *Sam.* 12. 7. *Acts* 2. 36, 37. *General Preaching* (said a worthy Divine) *is deceitful and deluding Preaching. He that Preacheth to every one preacheth to no one,* (saith a learned Doctor.) *'Tis like a loaf of bread set before a Company of little Children*, said Mr. *Hildersham. Universalia non operantur.* King *James* said of a Reverend Prelate of this Land, *Methinks this man Preacheth of death, as if death were at my back. John the Baptist*, who went before Christ in the spirit and power of *Elias* to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, was called a *Crier:* and how severe and strict was he in his Doctrine and Life?

Sinners asleep upon the Mouth of Hell must be awakened, as it were with the voice of thunder. If a Traveller passing through a Town in the dead of the night, saw a house burning; Would he whisper out *Fire, Fire?* no, but cry *Fire, Fire, Fire,* with a loud voice. 'Tis the Cry at Mid-

night

night that must awake the slumbring Virgins, and nothing else; *Jonah* must cry in the streets of *Nineveh*, and *Jeremy* must cry in the streets of *Jerusalem*. But what must we say or cry to the secure World? Mercy, Pardon, Peace, Salvation, Heaven? No, Fire, Fire, Hell, Hell, Damnation, eternal Wrath and Vengeance, without speedy and hearty repentance to God: this is the Plough and Harrow of the Law, that must go deep and break the fallow ground, and turn up the Turf upon the Sinners impenient obdurate heart. *John the Baptist*, and Jesus began their Ministry with the doctrine of repentance, *Mat.* 3. 8. 4. 17. Soundness, sincerity, zeal, perspicuity and impartiality in the distribution of the Word, is ordinarily bleft of God, to make ready a people prepared for him. So did that holy Man preach who was called the Heaven-driver. Our errand and business is the same with *John the Baptist*, to perswade and woo for Christ, and when we have gained Mens consent, and espoused them to Christ, our work is half done. Ministers are Gods Builders, Men must be fitted for the Building: The Stones in the Temple were not rude and unpolish'd Stones,

Stones, but hewed, squar'd and made ready, so also were the Utensils of the Tabernacle, the Gold, Silver, Brass, and carved Timber. There are no dead and dirty stones fit for Gods great House above, *They that were ready went in with him, &c.*

Sinner, is thy state hopeful, who cannot, will not live a life of holiness; It may be thou hast the face, profession, and form of Godliness, so had the foolish Virgins, so had the Pastor and Members of the Church in *Sardis*, *Rev.* 3. 1. There are also many that have not so much as the bark or form of Religion, and hate the life and power of it. Canst thou mock, and scoff at a vertuous pious life, and think thy self undone to part with thy lusts, and give thy heart to God, and yet hope well? If Christ doth not reign in thine heart, and make it holy, thou canst have no hope here, nor Heaven hereafter; *Command* (saith God) *that every Leper be put out of the Camp*, Num. 5. 2. Heaven, that Crown of Righteousness is called *The Inheritance of the Saints*. The Crown of heavenly glory will not suit with, or be set on a Lepers head, *Col.* 1. 12. 2 *Tim.* 4. 8.

Thirdly, If none shall go in with Christ but

but those which are ready. But a few then Comparatively of this great World shall be saved, and enter into glory. God hath said it, whose Word must stand. 'Tis but one of a City, and two of a Family, *Jer.* 3 14. There is but a handful ready for heaven, but Millions of men unready. How few of the six hundred thousand that came out of *Egypt* entred into the Promised Land. Look into the broad way to death, and hell, and see what Troops and Droves of men and women are there, and how few there be in the narrow way: No wonder you hear the Apostle say, *Though* Israel *be as the Sand of the Sea, but a Remnant shall be saved.* And who can read, and hear this, and not be Astonished? Are there not multitudes, thousands, and ten thousands that have the Image of Hell on them, and ready to drop into Eternal Flames, and will you not believe it? Separate the Wheat from the Tares, the Swine from the Sheep, the Precious from the Vile, *viz.* all prophane persons, all Hypocrites, and it will appear. What thoughts of heart, fear and trembling, should this cause in every place, and among all people? When Christ told his Friends the Elect tender-hearted

hearted Disciples, there was but one bad among them, they were all afraid. What cares, fears, jealousies should we have about our souls? All that concerns the soul is weighty, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. The evil of the soul is an Eternal evil, and the good of the soul is an Eternal good: Where then is your caution, and solicitude about this soul Affair? If the soul miscarry and is lost, all goes with it, *Mat.* 16. 26. *What will it profit a man to gain the whole World, and to lose his own Soul?* Christian, dost thou not see many set out in the Race, that fall short, and lose the Crown? and shall we not serve the Lord with fear? 1 *Cor.* 9. 24. *Psal.* 2. 11. *Heb.* 4. 1. Many shall seek to enter in at the Gate of Glory, and shall not be able, therefore strive, and strive as in an Agony, as for thy Life, to pass the strait Grate, *Luke* 13. 24. Many are called, few converted. *The Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out,* (said Christ) Oh, how sad is this! *Mat.* 8. 12. Be not deceived, the heart is a great deep, very deceitful, a most accurate Impostor; Grace is a mystery, the Old Serpent is subtil and very busie, and Pirate-like sets forth his false Colours, and transforms

forms himself into an Angel of Light. Therefore take thine heart with thee in private, and search and try thy state, and compare thy heart and life by the Word, that thou mayst find whether thou art ready, *Isa.* 28. 20. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Gal.* 6. 4.

Fourthly, If those that are ready shall go in with Christ, then Gods dear Saints should not fear death, but rather desire it. Those that are fit to die, need not fear to die. Death is yours (saith St. *Paul* to Believers) which though it dissolve the union between the soul and body, it cannot part God and his people. 'Tis more facil and easie to dry up the vast Ocean, or to separate Light and heat from the Sun, then to separate Christ from his Church, *Rom.* 8. 35. God saith, *They are his, my Portion, my Jewels, not one of which shall be lost.* All Gods holy Ones shall come safe to their Fathers House. Their Names are written in heaven, their Head and Husband is in heaven, *John* 14. 2. And St. *Paul* affirmeth, *That Saints sit there,* Eph. 2. 6. *The Righteous,* said St. *Peter, are scarcely saved,* 1 Pet. 4. 18. But truly saved. Whereas they that are but almost saved, are never saved. A thing done with difficulty

culty is done; it was with difficulty and danger the *Israelites* got into the Land of *Canaan*, with danger *Paul* and his company got safe to shore, and though they were in great peril, not one perished. A Babe in Christ is built upon a Rock, and a child in the Ark had bin as safe as a Giant. Heaven and happiness is not in our hands, but in the hands of one mighty to save. None can pluck them out of my Fathers hands, underneath are everlasting Arms. Who can be too hard for Omnipotency, or fetch a Believer out of Gods Hand? The Covenant of grace is an Everlasting Covenant, and shall stand fast. Death and the Grave could not dissolve the Hypostatical union of Christ, he took his humane body never to be separated from it, So also his mystical body. 'Tis true, Death and Dooms-day must be very terrible to vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction, God, Christ, Scripture, and Conscience are against them, and all their heaven is here, *Luke* 16. *Psal.*17.14. The Malefactor must needs fear the coming and Face of the Judge: *When* Paul *reason'd of Judgment*, Felix *trembled*, and cause enough, *Acts* 24. 26. But *lift up your Heads and rejoyce*, saith Christ: *Haste, my*

Be-

Beloved, haste. Amen. *So come Lord Jesus.* When the Bride is attired, and her beautiful Ornaments about her, she expecteth the coming of the Bridegroom, and when he comes his reward is with him: The Martyr could say, *'Tis well for the present* (who had the first Fruits of Glory) *and it would be better.* Your sorrow (said Christ) to his disconsolate Disciples shall be turned into joy, *I will not leave you, I will see you again.* Say then, Welcome Death who must carry me home: The beloved Wife doth not fear, when abroad, to come to her Husband, nor the dutiful Child to his indulgent Father: Christ called his Death *A going to his Father*: Who died to bring many Sons to Glory. A godly Gentlewoman had made death so familiar to her (by conversing with it, and preparing for it) that she did look upon it as her Fathers servant sent to fetch her home from School. Death doth the Saints more good then all Ordinances or Afflictions, it brings into fellowship with Christ quickly, immediately, eternally; the certainty of all Believers coming to Heaven, was typified in the *Israelites* passing over the Red-Sea, not one was drowned, neither was one *Egyptian*

saved. To note, that all wicked men will be damned. The men of the world have a short Heaven, and all in hand; but the Christians best is yet behind. In this strange Land Gods People are not known, being as Princes out of their own Country; *But when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall be like him, and see him as he is*, 1 Joh. 3.

Fifthly, It greatly concerns all while they have time and means, to make ready for Eternity. Two things argues an excellent spirit and great wisdom.

1. To see evils afar off.
2. To see time and opportunity when it is near.

First, to see evils afar off, especially soul-evils, an eternal loss; *A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself.* Secure sinner look forwards, and see what is before thee, or over thine head, *viz.* a cloud bigger then a mans hand, yea, a storm in the clouds, which *Noah* saw a hundred and twenty years before it came. The threatning Word, like Lightning, hath flasht in thine eyes, expect a Clack and Thunderbolt of Divine Wrath shortly to follow.

The

The Lord will come with Fire, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of Fire. *The day cometh that shall burn as an Oven, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble*, Isa. 66. 15. Mal. 4. 1. *The Coming of the Lord draweth near*, Jam. 5. 8. *Behold the Judge standeth before the door*; the year of vengeance and day of recompence is at hand; *He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness*, Acts 17. 31. *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*, Heb. 10. 37. *The day of the Lord so cometh as a Thief in the night, and when they shall say Peace and Safety, sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape*, 1 Thes. 5. 13.

Secondly, To see time, and opportunity when it is near, for every thing is beautiful in its Season: God hath joyned Time and Duty together, so must we. Hear what advice wise *Solomon* giveth us for our future welfare, *Eccles.* 9. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Wisdom, nor Knowledge, in the Grave, whither thou goest.* When thy breath is gone nothing can be done; what we leave undone here,

will

will be undone for ever: There is no coming back into the World to act another part, to live a Second life, to mend our work: For as the Tree falleth so it lieth; after death there is no means, no Ministry, no mercy, no duty: It will then be Impossible to repent, the date of Gods long suffering will be out, and the day of grace over, and no patience, no pity, no pardon on Gods part: There is no heaven to be found in hell, nor one drop of water to cool the tongue. Then fear, and seek the Lord, and secure your Souls while he may be found, *Isa.* 55. 6. Go now to the Fountain of Divine Grace, and fill and furnish your hearts with oil, or it will be too late to buy in a little time. 'Tis sad and doleful to think how poor Sinners will cry out for oil and grace, pity and pardon when it is too late, *Give us of your Oil, for our Lamps are gone out*, (said the foolish Virgins.) Is it nothing, Sinner, to slight an offered Saviour, will it not be bitterness in the latter end? *This is the condemnation, for how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?* Heb. 2. 3. Now, or never; the Holy God saith *To day*, and Christ saith, *He is at the door*, Rev. 3. 20. Will you

open

open to him, or keep the door of your hearts shut. What, shut out, and put off a Christ, a Christ, who is worth infinite Worlds? God forbid. Say in the words of the *Psalmist*, *Be ye lifted up ye everlast-Doors, and the King of Glory shall come in*, *Psal.* 24. 7, 9. Sinner, remember this, if thou dost Bar and Bolt thy door against Christ now, there will be two other doors shut in a little time.

First, The Door of Heaven, the Gate of Mercy and Glory to keep all out that are out.

Secondly, The Gate of Hell will be shut to keep all in that are in. When *Noah* that righteous man was shut up in the Ark, there was no Entrance for any more, all without were left to the deluge, and lost. It's dreadful to the Malefactor, when the Gaoler turns the Key upon him, and leaves him in his Bolts and close Prison. If it went so near *Moses* his heart to be shut out of *Canaan*, how wilt thou bear the shuting out of Heaven? There was a doleful Out-cry, when the Earth closed her Mouth and *Korah* and his company went down. O what a hideous shreck and cry will men make when the Mouth of Hell shall

be shut upon Sinners for ever, for ever.

Sixthly, Believers should highly esteem and heartily Love one another, being to go in together. Christians, Love is of God, and Christs new Commandment; And let me tell you, Saints have the greatest Obligation to Love.

First, You are everlastingly and equally beloved of one God and Father, and are given to one dear Redeemer, to whom your hearts are joyned as your Head and Husband. You are renewed and sanctified by one most holy Spirit, whose mark is set upon you all; You are going to *Jerusalem* that is above, towards which your faces are, being fellow-Citizens with the Saints and Houshold of God. And when your Warfare and Peregrination is ended, you shall begin with Christ, and meet in an everlasting Habitation. Brethren, and beloved, will you not love them whom not only the great and good God, but great and good men have loved. *The Righteous is more excellent then his Neighbour*; and such were *Davids* excellent ones, and his companions, *Psal.*

Psal. 16. 3. *Psal.* 119. 63. 'Tis a Character of a Citizen of *Zion* to contemn a vile Person, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord, *Psal.* 15. 4. *And by this we know*, saith the beloved Disciple, *that we are passed from death to life.* 'Tis storied of an ancient King who made a Feast, and invited a Company of poor Christians, and he bade his Nobles also. Now when the Nobles came, he set them in his Hall; when the Christians came he had them up into his Presence-Chamber: One ask'd him the Reason; He answered, *I do not this as I am their King here, for I respect you more then them: but as I am King of another World, I must needs honour them, because God doth most honour them, and they be Kings and Princes with me.* Moreover, 'tis said, that *Constantine* the Great kept many godly Ministers about him, and though they were but meanly habited, he not considering their out-side, but honouring the Image of God in them, set them at his Table, and took them with him whithersoever he went. *Maud* the Wife to *Henry* the First, King of *England*, to shew her Piety, did wash, dress, wipe and kiss the Ulcers, Sores and Feet of poor People; which her Brother

seeing and disliking, said, *If the King your Husband knew this, you should never kiss his lips*; She replied, *The Feet of the King of Heaven are to be preferred before the lips of a King on Earth.* Mr. *John Fox* that wrote our Book of Martyrs, being asked (upon his return into *England* after the death of Queen *Mary*) whether he did remember such poor Christians of his former Acquaintance; Answered, *I forget Lords and Ladies to remember them.*

Seventhly, See the Reason why Gods People (being in the pursuit of Christ and Heaven) are and must be very serious, diligent and constant in holy Performances. *Davids* soul longed for Gods Courts, to see his Power and his Glory in his Sanctuary, *Psal.* 63. 2. Christian, art resolved to secure thy soul, and make sure for heaven, go to the Ordinance of God as Christs Mother went into the Temple to find her Son, Divine Ordinances are the Ways and Walks of the Lord in which the Spirit works: The Bed wherein Christ and the Spouse meet and solace themselves. Here the North and South-wind blow upon Christs Garden, and cause the Spices to flow

flow forth. The Honey-dews and Showers of Bleſſings under the Spouts of the Sanctuary, make their ſouls like *Gideons* Fleece, moiſt when others are dry and dead. Holy *David* had cauſe to ſay, *I love the Habitation of thine Houſe, and the Place where thine Honour dwelleth*; and he deſired not only ſometimes to go into Gods Houſe, but to ſtay there for ever, *Pſal.* 26. 8. 27. 4. What a comforting, encouraging and comely ſight is it to ſee men going to Heaven, reſort to the Word and pure Worſhip of God, as Doves to their Windows, *Pſal.* 122. 1. Chriſtians, when and where ſhould holy Men meet but under the Ordinances of Heaven, and that upon holy Sabbaths, to hear awaking Sermons, and to receive ſealing Sacraments? Shall wicked men who ſerve the Devil, and are likely to periſh for ever, meet in Taverns, Ale-houſes, Harlots houſes, and at other Fleſh-pleaſing Recreations, and will not you meet at the Poſts of Wiſdoms door? Here are the green and freſh Paſtures in which the ſouls of the Righteous flouriſh. And what makes ſo many declining Chriſtians, (who are afraid to die becauſe unfit to die) but the loſs of ſuch

ſweet opportunities for their ſouls. Now to quicken all to daily diligence, in the fear of God conſider theſe things.

1. You that are moſt remiſs and careleſs would be as well thought of, as the moſt laborious, lively, watchful, thriving Chriſtian, to whom the Word Preached is as ſweet as honey, and prefer'd above their appointed food. There are who can willingly part with a Meals-meat to hear a Sermon for their ſouls.

2. You would gladly reap their Sick-bed-comforts, Joys, Refreſhments, when dying and going into the everlaſting World. How many careleſs Chriſtians, with *Ephraim*, will tread out the Corn, but will not break the clods, *i. e.* take pains for their ſouls?

3. You will be willing to go into Heaven with them. There were that would have gone into the Ark with *Noah*, who had no mind to build an Ark to ſave them. To cloſe this I ſhall add two things:

1. To live in the Neglect of commanded Duties, and in the Practice of known ſins, will be a ſting and ſtab to thy ſoul.

2. To be ſleight, formal and heartleſs in Duties will ſtarve thy ſoul. Chriſtian, this will

will not make for thy comfortable account, or prepare thee to go into Heaven with Christ.

SECT. VI.

Second Use of Caution or Dehortation; Must none go in with Christ, but those that are inherently prepared and fitted?

1. Take heed of leaning upon, and trusting too much to Lamps, Duties, Parts, common Grace, Baptismal Regeneration, Morality, self-Righteousness, legal Terrour, servile fear, or any thing that may leave you short of Christ and Heaven: Think upon *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, and the *Israelites* that came to the borders of *Canaan*, and were shut out of that good Land. How many have fallen from the Pinacle of the Temple into the Place of torment? And if some go to heaven by the gates of hell, others go to hell by the gates of heaven. Self-ignorance, carnal confidence, presumption and a false peace have caused thousands to perish. The peace and calm in many a Mans conscience, is the Devils peace, *Luke* 11. 21. It's sad to see men go singing to hell; whereas

true Peace is grounded upon the Covenant of Grace, the Righteousness of Christ, union and communion with Christ, likeness and conformity to Christ, and the witness of the Spirit, *Isal.* 54. 10. *Rom.* 8. 6. *Heb.* 12. 14.

2. Tremble at the thoughts of being a Sinner in *Zion*. Take heed of hypocrisie in the Profession of Religion. An hypocrite is a wicked man under a disguise, or in a godly mans habit; but the Vizard and Paint on mens faces will fall off when they shall stand before God, who searches the heart.

3. Do not judge of Mens Preparedness for Heaven by their Agreement with us in opinion, or by their mild and good Natures, &c. We are very apt to judge of mens habits and graces, by their natural tempers, and hereby we run upon a mistake. A Dram of Evangelical Sincerity would have made the young man in the Gospel seem a great Saint. A little grace makes a great shew in some tempers, and a great deal scarce appears in others. A little Sugar serves for sweet Wine, but there is more required to sweeten that which is more sharp.

4. Let

4. Let young Converts not meddle too much with hard and difficult things in Religion. Opinions and knotty Controversies will soon engross the heart, and puzzle the head, and waste much time, and hurt your souls. Read the Word, study well your *Catechisms*, and be well acquainted with the Substantials and Fundamentals of Religion, which are essential to the being and well-being of your souls in grace. Consult with your faithful Pastors, take heed of Impostors, and be earnest with God in Prayer for the spirit of a sound mind.

5. You that are sincere must yield to no base Doubts, Fears and Objections of Satan and your own hearts. Deny not the grace of God in you, which is great dishonour to God, and to the Spirit of God. Hath God taken thee out of the herd of Sinners, and converted thine heart, and written thy Name in Heaven, and wilt thou attempt to raze it out, and write thy Name upon the doors of Hell? Christian, do not harken to the Father of Lies, who works upon thy dark and melancholy humour, to rob thy soul of comfort.

6. Let all take heed of Neglecting frequent trial of your selves and State:

caſt your hearts and the Old Serpent be too hard for you. If thou would not be deceived about thy ſoul and heaven, and undone for ever, reflect and caſt thine eye upon thy ſelf. Let thine eyes be as the Faces of the Cherubims, inward. A timely, diligent and plain-hearted examination of a mans ſelf, is a moſt weighty and important duty. If the Merchant or Shopkeeper doth not take an account of his Wares, and caſt up his Books, how can he judge of his Eſtate? How can we underſtand how Matters go between God and us, if we never look within? This leads the way to the next thing in order.

SECT. VII.

The third *Uſe*. By way of enquiry, *They that were ready went in with him to the Marriage*. Enquire, is all well within me, have I the white Stone, and new Name? *viz.* The things that accompany Salvation? Some are curious in diſſecting of Bodies to underſtand the Anatomy, *viz.* The inward parts and contexture of it: But ſee that thou art skilful in the Souls Ana-

tomy

tomy. Dive into the secrets of thy soul, and closet of thine heart, and be critical in this disquisition. Self-Examination is a serious and busie work of the soul, whereby it takes a true Prospect and Estimate of its spiritual Estate. But how few are well read in the Book of their own hearts? The foolish Virgins, had they searched their Vessels, might have found the want of Oil. Soul, art ready, or not ready? This is a great question, and hardly to be resolved. 'Tis much like that of Christ to the man that came to the Feast without a wedding-Garment: When Christ asked him, *How he came thither*, he was speechless. Sirs, if the thing here enquired after, were about secular and worldly Affairs, I might expect a ready Answer. Ask the skilful *Husbandman*, whether the Corn and Grass be ripe and ready for the Sythe or Sickle? he will soon answer. Ask the Heir, whether he be ready for the Inheritance? and he will tell you. Ask the Student, whether he be ready to ascend the Pulpit? or the Apprentice, when his time is out, whether he is ready to set up for himself? and ask young Men and Maids that are grown to their ripe and flourishing Age, whether they

they are ready for Marriage? and they can answer, We are ready. But are you fit for Christ, and prepared for Death and Judgment? Who can or dare say, Ready, ready, Lord? There are who please themselves to think or say, they have so many bags ready for a Mortgage or Purchase, such Portions, so many hundreds, such Lands, Livings, Farms or Mannors ready for their Children; and it may be their souls are so far from being prepared for Christ and Heaven, that they are ready for the Devil and Damnation. Remember here only, that they which were ready were received in, and the Door was shut. Five did lie so long asleep, that did little think they were unready, till the Bridegroom came, and it was too late. There are who deceive themselves with a golden flattering dream of Glory, and are ready to drop down into eternal flames. Whereas many tender-hearted gracious souls that are ready, fear to step in at the Passage, or over the narrow Bridge, between life and death, the End of Time and the Beginning of Eternity. O how accurate, curious and serious should all be in enquiring about signs and marks of readiness for

for Christ. Now before I come to the Solution of the Question, I must let you know (by the way) whom I intend not in this use of Trial.

1. I intend no ignorant or impious Person.

2. No Heretick or wretched Apostate, who is departed from the faith and form of sound words, and denieth the Lord that bought him.

3. No Hypocrite, or washed-Swine, whose Conscience and the Word of Truth will tell him, his heart is not right in the sight of God. These may have Evidences for Hell, they have none for Heaven. And that every man may prove his own works, here are added marks of Readiness for Christ and Heaven.

First, When a Believer by Faith, Repentance, and new Obedience, hath made his Calling, Election, and Love of Christ sure to him, he is ready for the Marriage. And to enjoy Eternal Fellowship with Christ in Heaven. Christian, if thou art Christs Garden, or a true Branch in the true Vine, thou canst not miss of glory. It was not hanging on the out-side of the Ark did save, but being in the Ark. So when a

poor

poor Christian hath good hope that he is one of the Sinners Christ came to save, and can say as St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 2. 20. *Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.* I know in whom I have believed, he is ready, I shall but change my place, I shall not change my company, said one dying. I know I believe, as I know I live, said an Eminent Minister. 'Tis no more for me to die (said another) then to close my eyes. I see all Heaven; O what a blessed sight is the Face of God, said a famous Minister, when going out of the World! I see Heaven-gate stand wide open, said a Christian when departing this life. When Mr. *Bolton* came to die, and some of his Parish being at his Bed-side, desir'd him to express what he felt in his soul of the Comforts of Christ; He answered, *I am by the wonderful mercy of God as full of comfort as my heart can hold; I feel nothing in my Soul but Christ, with whom I heartily desire to be.* When a Believer hath tasted the sweetness of the Pardon of Sin, and inward Peace, his Conscience being calm and quiet, he is ready for a dying-hour, and to step into Heaven. He may say, *Now let thy Servant depart in peace: for mine*

eyes have seen thy Salvation. Haste, my Beloved, make no tarrying, O my God; I desire to be dissolv'd, and to be with Christ. Which is far, far the better, *Phil.* 1.

Secondly, When the King of Glory doth bring in his rich Ornaments and Hangings, and beautifie the soul, and dwells in it, the Saint is ready to go in with Christ. Our own righteousness is a filthy Garment that must be cast off. Whereas when the Kings Daughter and Spouse of Christ is made lovely by the change of Rayment, or Wedding-Garment, the glorious Robe of Christ, pure, perfect, personal righteousness, she is ready. We are compleat in him, yea, all fair, and without spot. Though Christ finds his Church speckled, sullied and polluted, he doth not leave her so. *I put a beautiful Crown upon thy head, and thou wert perfect through my comeliness,* Ezek. 16. 8, 13, 14. Ephes. 5. 25, 26. This Righteousness of God doth reconcile and pacifie God. 'Tis said, that *Pilate* wearing Christs Coat without a Seam, pacified the wrath of angry *Cæsar.* Christian, if by the Hand of Faith thou hast

haſt put on Chriſt, thou art as a Queen prepared for the Preſence of the King of Glory. Whereas without this Righteouſneſs, there is nothing but ſhameful nakedneſs in the beſt, ſo that you will be ready to cry out, as the *Iſraelites* to *Moſes*, (when God appeared upon Mount *Sinai*) *Let not the Lord come near us, leſt we die:* Or you will (with *Adam*) rather ſeek to hide your ſelves from God then appear before him. Now ſoul, look in and examine thy ſtate; the time was thou wert without God and Chriſt in the world, and couldſt commit evil with both hands earneſtly; the time was, when thy Conſcience was ſear'd, and Sin was no burden or ſhame to thee, though thou didſt lick up this vomit, and wallow in the mire, and livedſt in it as thy trade; but now God hath broken thy conſcience, and brought thee under a ſenſe and ſentence of death, and made thee poor in ſpirit, and to lie down aſhamed and confounded, becauſe of all thy ſins before him: And the Lord hath endeared Chriſt to thee, and cauſed thee to ſee a glorious riſing Sun in his Righteouſneſs, which the Goſpel hath brought to light: though thou wert the greateſt Sinner,

ner, a poor, naked, condemned, vile, curſed Creature; thou haſt that which renders thee like an Angel in the pure eyes of God, and which will quiet thy conſcience, and anſwer to all the demands of Law and Juſtice. Therefore be not diſcouraged to die and ſtand before God, if he ſhould ſend for thee this day or night; Thou haſt a Chriſt to carry with thee, and the Angels will bid All welcome to the Quire of heavenly Glory that are clad with Chriſts Righteouſneſs.

Thirdly, When the Bias, Inclination, and Stream of the Heart, that was wont to run downward toward Sin, and the World, doth now run upwards towards Chriſt and Heaven, the Believer is actually ready. If there be a Supream and Conquering affection in thy ſoul to Chriſt, and there is none above him in thine heart, ſo that thou canſt not, wilt not be quiet, or ſatisfied without him, thou art fit to go in with him. The ſoul of the Believer doth follow ſo hard after God, that ye may as ſoon nouriſh and ſatiate a lively child with dry Breaſts, and a craving Appetite with Air and

and Words, as a Christian without a Christ. Canst say as the Church in her Pathetical Suit. *Cant.* 8. 6, 7. *Set me as a Seal upon thine heart.* No Place but the heart of a Saviour, for a panting soul. 'Tis as if she had said, carry me in thy mind, in thy eyes, and in thine hands as a Jewel on the Breast, as a Ring on the Finger; Let me be near thine heart, and carried up and down in thy heart for ever. The Churches Love to Christ was so vehement and strong, and of that Conquering Nature, that she could no more resist it, or stand before it, then Death, Fire, or the Grave could be resisted. Sinner, is Christ so lifted up in thy esteem, as to attract and draw thy soul after him. Moreover, when Christ comes in, the World must give place and go out. Is thine heart in a great measure dead to the World? Doth it appear to be (as one calleth it, a great Nothing) dust and shadows? 'Tis said of the *Israelites*, Acts 7. 39. *Their hearts turned back again into* Egypt; *They carried* Egypt *into the Wilderness with them.* 'Tis said of Queen *Mary*, if she had been ript up after her death, *Calice* might have been found in her heart. *Lot's* Wife was commanded

to

to make haſt out of *Sodom*, but ſhe left her heart behind. But how is it with thee? Art thou riſen with Chriſt, and is the World crucified to thee, and thine heart above it? Doſt look upon the World as the *Jews* on *Babylon*, as a ſtrange Land? Canſt ſay as *David*, 1 Chron. 29. 15. *We are ſtrangers before thee. I am a ſtranger in the Earth*, Pſal. 119. When the things of the World draw our affections ſtrongly after them; Chriſt and Heaven cannot be ſo precious and deſirable; but Believers know the things of the World are not worthy of their Love. They are common to good and bad, they are uncertain, they cannot ſave nor ſatisfie, they cannot keep us from ſickneſs, nor from death, nor ſave our ſouls from hell. They are no carriage for another world. *I am going to the Place* (ſaid the Martyr) *where money is no current coin.* 'Tis ſaid of Gods Worthies, *They did ſeek a better Country, that is an heavenly*; and confeſſed, *They were Strangers and Pilgrims in the Earth*, Heb. 11. 13, 14. Now if your Treaſure be in Heaven, your Affections in Heaven, and your Converſations heavenly, you may be aſſured of being there in a little time. Again,

gain, doſt conflict with ſin, and get ſome conqueſt over it day by day? Is thy ſoul eſtranged from all kinds of ſin? Sinner, canſt thou be fit to go in with Chriſt, and hide and harbour his Enemies, and hold a truce with ſome ſecret ſins?

The Uſe is for Enquiry, therefore ask thy ſelf theſe Queries, Doſt thou ſpare no *Agag*, a ruling ſin? Withdraw no wedge of Gold or *Babyloniſh* Garment, a gainful ſin? Doſt make a League with no *Gibeonite?* Canſt with *Joſhua*, deſtroy every *Canaanite*, even that ſin which for ſweetneſs thou rolleſt under thy tongue, the ſtumbling-block of thine own iniquity, the *Peccatum in deliciis?* Doſt batter the Tower of *Jericho?* Canſt break down the Bulwark of the Fleſh? and ſay of every ſin, as the *Jews* of Chriſt, *Away with him, let him be crucified?* thou art a prepared Soul. When Chriſt that glorious Sun is riſen and enthron'd in the heart, that a man can ſay, Come and ſee the place where the Lord reigns; He is ready for Heaven.

---

4. When the Believer hath ſo increaſed his Talent, that the Grain of Muſtard-ſeed is

is become a great Tree, (*viz.*) He hath gotten such a stock of grace, that he can say as the rich man of his Ground, *I have much laid up*, he is ready. Three things Saints do ardently desire in order to this Fitness:

1. Grace in the reality of it.
2. Grace in the fulness of it.
3. The gracious Presence, *Let my Beloved come into his Garden*, said the Church.

Christians, you must not only have Grace habitually, but actually, in its most lively and vigorous exercise, to prepare you for Heaven. Grace is a Talent sent down from Heaven, and put into our hands to trade with. When the Oil is in the Vessel, and the Lamps burn bright, *i. e.* divine Grace shines in the Soul like Stars in the Night; the Christian is in a fit posture to meet Christ. Christians, why should you take up your stand in Religion, and not go on to Perfection. Even as *Apelles* upon all his Pictures would write, *Faciebat, non facit.* You must not suffer your Lamps to wax dim, and your Oil to waste. A Dwarf is a monster in Nature. As there are some decayed in their Trades and Estates, and others grown poor

and

and consumptive in their Bodies, so are there withered and decayed Professors in every Society, the new man is very weak and feeble in very many. What are become of the graces, comforts, and delights of the Spirit? This stream doth not run, Rivers of Living Water do not flow out of our Bellies: Where is the old stock, and the new increase? That plenty and fulness of the Spirit, that must ripen our souls and make us ready? If grace like the house of *David* did revive, and wax stronger and stronger in you, it would cure your Stupor and Security: and give you (bear with the expression) a fresh Start, or new Alarm for Heaven. That grace is not in the gaining hand, is most apparent by your letting down your Watch, and falling asleep. By your Listlessness to Duties, and want of Life, and affection in them, by the prevalency of corruption, and decay of Godly sorrow for sin, and inward peace, by the blotting of your Evidences for heaven, and want of Communion with Christ, who stands aloof off from the withered and decayed Christian. Friend, dost thou not hear the Lord say, I have something against thee because thou hast lost thy first Love? We

read

read of the first days of *David*, and of the first Ripe Fruits; The first Fruits of the Spirit; the love of the Espousals. But where shall we find it? What is become of the sweet Incense of Prayer and Praise, thou wast wont to send up to heaven? The time was, thou couldst be early and late with God by solemn and secret Prayer, and direct, and dart up thy soul to heaven often in a day, by occasional, ejaculatory Prayers; Is not this golden Lamp gone out? Was there never a Spirit of Prayer among Gods People in this Nation? What is become of that inward affection in Prayer, where shall we find it? Is all our Religion resolv'd into forms and formality? How little spiritual Worship hath God by the best of us, who will accept of no other Worship? Where are those frequent Visits from Christ in his Ordinances you have found? Where are the choice fruits in Christs Garden? You that are planted in the House of the Lord, must flourish in the Courts of our God, and cast forth your Roots like *Lebanon*. *Grow in Grace, and you shall come into glory*, 2 Pet. 1. 11.

Question.

Question.

Do all Gods People (who shall go in with Christ) die in a comfortable condition, and with Moses *see the Promised Land: or have they a Prospect of their heavenly Country?*

Answ. No: Scripture and Experience prove the contrary. And here I shall lay down some Particulars, both to quicken and support Gods people, whose souls seem to be at the very point of dispair.

1. The state of a godly man, and his future felicity is not to be adjudged by the manner of his death, or his sensible comforts at the end of his days, but by the general course and tendency of his life. A Ship that comes home richly laden may meet with a storm at the Harbors mouth. *It matters not much* (said Dr. *Harris* to his holy disconsolate wife,) *whether comfort comes an hour before death, or an hour after death.* A godly man may die mourning; God may give him the Garment of gladness in Heaven, for his spirit of heaviness in Earth. A holy Minister of this Nation was wont to say, *He never tasted*

the

the sweet of Religion all his Life, meaning Assurance of Heaven.

Secondly, Believing doth precede sealing, the direct act of Faith goes before the reflect act of Faith, the Faith of Adherence before the Faith of Evidence, *Ephes.* 1. 13.

Thirdly, The Kingdom of Glory is not promised to Assurance, but to Faith and Repentance. There are many now in heaven that were not assured of it till they came thither. And how many tender serious souls are there who prize none in the World like a Christ, who love him with all the regards of the Lord, who hate the Enemies of his Scepter with a perfect hatred, who would not willingly offend or grieve him in the least measure, who cleave unto him as the only Rock of Salvation, who would not relinquish their interest in him for Millions of Worlds. And yet they weep with *Mary*, because they cannot see their Lord. They conflict with fears and doubts day and night, and have not that reflective Evidence and Assurance that he is their Christ their God. The hour (said one) in which Assurance comes is seldom, and its stay is short. Those that have it,

have it not at all times; as there are degrees of Grace, ſo there are different meaſures of Aſſurance. The Jewels of Grace may lie hid in the cloſe and dark Cabinet of the heart, until the Spirit ſhine upon its own Grace. The choiceſt Flowers have their Roots out of ſight. There are who be as truly in the favour of God, as the Angels themſelves, but they are very doubtful of it. 'Tis reported that two Miniſters came to viſit a godly woman, who was weeping over her Child in the Cradle: and being asked by one of the Miniſters the cauſe of griefs, ſhe ſaid, Becauſe I have profeſt Religion more then twenty years, and am not Aſſured of my Salvation. One of the Miniſters asked the woman, Whoſe child is this in the Cradle? ſhe anſwered, Mine, but ſaid he, Doth the Child know you are the Mother of it? She replied, No: which queſtion was a conſolation to this dejected ſad woman. *The Lord knoweth thoſe that are his.*

Fourthly, A man may come ſafe to heaven without aſſurance, but not without Grace and inherent Holineſs. But remember this, the more careleſs and indifferent a man or woman is about the aſſurance of hea-

ven

ven, the further off he is from it. Therefore prize it highly, press after it vehemently, if thou wouldst attain it.

Fifthly, Great castings down, and soul-distresses, do often Usher in much joy and inward peace. As a dark misty night goes before a bright morning, and a cold long Winter before a Fruitful Spring. Some that have been brought down to the Valley of the shadow of Death, have also been carried up to the Mount of Transfiguration. The Spirit of Bondage doth lead the way to the Spirit of Adoption, *Rom.* 8. A Christian that is poor and contrite in his own sense, may have his soul in a prosperous condition. And 'tis a great Faith to cleave to Christ and the Promises, when a man hath little comfort. *The time may come* (saith a great Divine) *When the Faith of Adherence may be all in all.* Though thy soul is cast down, assurance may be at the door. When *Mary Magdalen* was weeping, and thought her Lord was risen and gone, Christ was behind her, *Joh.* 20.

Sixthly, Saints do not usually die in a Swoon or Spiritual Consumption. If *Eutichus* fall down dead, he must rise up again. So God will one way or other re-

cover his declining people, and revive his work in them, and make them ready. Consider, it greatly concerns all that will live and die comfortably, and enjoy Christ and Heaven Eternally, to press after certainty, and to make ready. Are all our desirable and best things in the World uncertain, and shall our souls and heaven be so too? In things of infinite less value, men are for certainty, and why not in this? The Usurer would have money told twice, who was wont to say to his Man, It is good to be sure. In case of money lent, men will have double security, by Bond and Land. In *London* there is an Ensuring-Office for Merchandize. And will you have no care to preserve your souls? If certainty of Salvation were to be bought, *God knows, If I had ten Earths* (said a very holy and learned Divine) *I would part with them for it.*

SECT. VIII.

The 4. *Use* is to perswade all who have any regard to God and their dear souls, to be in readiness. Awake out of sleep, and get your Garments on, Oyl in the Vessel, Loins girt, your Lamps burning, that you may be ready

ready, and the Lord find you ſo, as well as men think you ſo.

This plain *Uſe* of Exhortation is directed to two ſorts of Perſons.

1. Thoſe who are wholly unready for Death and Judgment.

2. To thoſe who are in part ready, but not ſo ready as they ſhould be, who muſt ſtand before the Lord: And as they themſelves another day will wiſh they had been.

1. Thoſe who are wholly unready to go in with Chriſt.

Queſt. Are there any ſuch? yea, more then a few. How many hear, and now read theſe Sermons, do know themſelves unready, and will not prepare: whoſe Conſciences tell them if they ſhould die, and ſtand before God in their preſent condition, they are undone for ever? If they ſhould receive a Summons to come to Gods Bar this day, or this night, we might hear them cry out, Spare me a little longer, Lord, ſpare me the Prince, and me the Prieſt; Spare me the Father, and me the Son; Spare me the Mother, and me the Daughter; Spare me the rich man, and me the poor man; Spare me the Maſter, and me

the Servant; Spare me the young man, and me the old man; Spare me the Miſtreſs, and me the Maid; Spare me the Learned, and me the Unlearned man; me the ſickly man, and me the healthy man; Lord, for one month, or year more, before I go to the place from whence I ſhall never return.

To open and Illuſtrate, *viz.* that there are abundance unready. Let me ask you, What think you of the Infidel World, the Uncircumciſed in heart and fleſh? How many Kingdoms and Nations are there, who know not the way to a life of Immortality by a Mediator? Theſe are the Devils Free-hold, without hope, and ſtumble down to Hell in the dark. But to leave the poor Pagans, (who periſh for want of viſion) and to come nearer to our ſelves: What vaſt multitudes are there in the Chriſtian World, and that among baptized Perſons, who enjoy the means of Salvation, and are altogether unready, for Chriſt and Heaven.

To deſcend to Particulars.

1. Thoſe that are groſly ignorant of God and Jeſus Chriſt, *viz.* Ignorant of his Nature, Perſon, Offices, they have neither a head

a head or hearty knowledge of Christ. Their minds are blind and understandings darkned. The first Work God doth to prepare sinners for Heaven, is to open their eyes, and to bring them into the Light of Life. But to these, God, Christ, Faith, Repentance is a mystery. A woman being asked by a Minister, Whether Christ by whom she expected Salvation, was a Man or a Woman? Answered, She could not tell. Are such ready? shall they be saved who are under the power of the Prince of Darkness? *Righteous Father* (said Christ) *the World hath not known thee*, John 17. 25. And truly Heaven is no more in Hell then preparation for it is in an ignorant Person. Those who are made fit for Heaven, are delivered from the Power of Darkness, *Col.* 1. 12, 13. Under the Law God would not accept of blind Sacrifices, *Deut.* 15. 21. *Psal.* 11. 27. 2 *Cor.* 4. 3. O then, cry after Knowledge, and lift up thy voice for Understanding; Take hold of Instruction, and let her not go, for she is thy Life, *Prov.* 2. 2. Without knowledge the heart cannot be good nor fit for God and Heaven.

2. What shall we think of those that rest only in outward Priviledges, who being

born of Blood, and of the will of the Flesh. And by timely Education have attained the knowledge of sound principles and way of Salvation, but were never awakened, convinced, and under any distress about their souls; are these ready for Christ and Heaven? *Jo.* 8. 39. *Rom.* 7. 9. *Rev.* 3. 17. *The whole need not the Physitian,* said Christ. Those who are strangers to the Spirit of Bondage, and Pangs of the new Birth, who never saw those treasures of wrath due to sin, he that was never heard to say, I am unclean, I am cast down, I am heavy Laden, I am lost, I am undone, I die, I am damned, if Christ and Mercy come not speedily. Without conviction there can be no conversion. A woman travels and then brings forth a Child, *Acts* 2. 36. 16. 30. Many steal quietly to Hell, few or none go smoothly to Heaven. Men commonly pass thorow the straits before they enter into the Harbour or Haven of Rest. The Lash of the Law is our School-Master to bring us to Christ, *Gal.* 3. 24. But alas, thousands are deluded with a cheap conversion, that never had a sick-night or a pained-soul for sin. Indeed all are not converted with a voice of Thunder, and brought to Christ with

with a mighty Rushing Wind, and terrible Tempest and Consternation of Spirit. Christ may steal secretly into the heart, as into *Lydia*, but 'tis very seldom. Security sends many to Hell, whereas a sore Conscience is better then a seared Conscience, and a burning Ague is more hopeful then a Lethargy.

3. What think you of the *Belialists* and *Damme's*, who curse *Jacob* and defie *Israel*? *viz.* that deride holiness, and make a sport of sin, and fly in the face of their Creator, and dare God to kill and damn them every day. There are who live as if they were sent into the World to do nothing but sin, serve the Devil, and ruine themselves. What droves and multitudes of libidinous profane persons are there in every place? How is the broad way crowded with men of corrupt Minds and cursed Practices, who drop poison as they go, and ride post to Hell? These scarlet-sinners will break thorow all dangers to have their lusts satisfied. As *Nero's* Mother said, *Let him kill me so he may Reign.*

Occidat modo imperet.

Let the Devil damn us ſo we may have the ſweet of ſin. Theſe do not believe a day of eternal Retribution after death. And are they prepared for Chriſt and Heaven, who are ready for the Devil and Hell?

4. What are the ſpiritually barren under all the Dreſſings and Dews of Heaven, and the abundance of Apoſtates in heart and practice? We may take up *Davids* Lamentation upon the Death of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, and ſay with grief, *How are the Mighty fallen?* The Falling-Sickneſs hath been very rife, and an Epidemical Diſeaſe among us. Theſe are days of as many inſtances of Apoſtacy and back-ſliding, and that from as high and glorious Pitches as any Age ſince the Apoſtles days can Parallel. How many Stars have been caſt from Heaven? How many Trees plucked up by the Roots? Many ſeeming Stars are diſcovered to be but Meteors, and now gone down in obſcurity. Are theſe ready for Chriſt? The penny will not be paid until the Evening; the End Crowns the Action. He that preſſeth on and runs to the End of the Race ſhall have the prize, *Ezek.* 3. 20. *Mat.*

Mat. 24. 12, 13. *Heb.* 6. 4. 11-38, 39. 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. 1 *Cor.* 9. 24. *Revel.* 2. 10.

5. What think you of thoſe Millions of unholy Worldlings, who trade altogether for the Earth, and lay up no Treaſure in Heaven? Their Gold, Silver, Houſes, Lands, Wives, Children, are their God. They deſire no better Heaven then to be perpetuated in the Honours, Profits and Pleaſures of the World; *I would not leave my part in* Paris, *for my part in* Paradiſe, ſaid a prophane Wretch. A Noble man of *Vienna* at his great Feaſt, and in the midſt of his Jollity, ſaid, *If God would leave me my Riches, and ſuffer me to live but a thouſand years to take my pleaſure, I would willingly leave God his Heaven.* The Children of *Reuben* and *Gad*, being Enriched with the ſpoil of their Enemies, and come into a good Land, deſired to have it for their Inheritance, and not to go into the Promiſed Land, *Numb.* 32. 1, 2, 3, 4. Are they prepar'd for Heaven, who can take the World for their Portion? *Mat.* 19. 23.

6. What are the thouſands and ten thouſands of Chriſt and mercy-ſleighting ſinners,

ſinners, many of which will not come within the ſound of the Silver-Tumpets, (*viz.*) to wait upon God in the Uſe of means. There are who ſeem to be reſolved to throw their ſouls to hell. God commands to do no Murder, and ſelf-Murder is wondred at, becauſe the care of life, and fear of death, is planted in mans Nature; but ſelf-deſtruction, ſelf-damnation, is very common. There are who will ſay, We are no Thieves, nor Murderers, nor Adulterers, or Drunkards, but to be Chriſt-ſleighters is worſe, and more damnable. This made Chriſt grieve, ſigh, weep, in a melting manner, over *Jeruſalem*, and his Compaſſionate bewailing of them, was enough to turn ſtones into tears, nevertheleſs, they wilfully refuſed him, *Mat.* 23.37. This will be ſad, like the impenitent Thief to periſh, and a Saviour by his ſide. We read of a whole City, upon the loſs of their Swine, intreated Chriſt to be gone out of their Coaſts, *Mat.* 8. *ult.* Are theſe ready to wear the Crown of Glory?

7 Add to theſe, thoſe, (and not a few) who hold not the head, but Execrable, and Abominable opinions, which they pertinaciouſly

ciously defend. If men make not the Person of the Mediator the object of their faith and hope, and with the *Sadducees* deny the Resurrection of the Body, Are they prepar'd to go in with Christ? Heresie is reckoned among the worst of the sins of the Flesh: 'tis a Spiritual Witchcraft, and a covert, close way to hell. Not only wicked practises, but corrupt opinions will damn mens souls, 2 *Pet.* 2. *Paul* told the erronious *Galatians* they were bewitched; when mens Cattel, or the bodies of their Children are bewitched, how sad is it, but 'tis more dreadful to have souls bewitched. There are an abundance of Virtiginous Leprous heads in this Nation. Head-diseases are hardly cured, they do often kill. Ye therefore Beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness, 2 *Pet.* 3. 17.

8. Joyn to these your sinners in *Zion*, and Tares among the Wheat, the false-hearted professors, and those who think their good intentions and own Righteousness will save them. This Golden Idol of self-Righteousness hath shut many out of heaven,

heaven, *Mat.* 5. 20. *Luke* 18. 11, 12, 13. *Rom.* 10. 3.

9. What are those that say they are too young, and it is too soon to part with sin, and prepare for heaven? are such ready for the Bridegrooms coming? These do not consider that more die young then live long; and how little Graves, small Bones, and Skulls of all sizes are in our burial-places? Our Proverb is, That the Lambs skin many times come to the Market before the Sheeps skin. The young men are dead; 'tis said of *Jobs* Sons, *Job* 1. 17. Again, enquire about the time of mens conversion, and you will find few converted in Old Age. 'Tis almost a Prodigy to see an old man or woman convert and turn to God. Moreover, those who put off their preparation for heaven, do not know what a life of joy and pleasure they live, who have tasted the sweet of Religion, and gotten Evidence for Heaven early. And who can tell what an abundance of young men and women are now in Flame? The sins of youth *David* pray'd for the pardon of, *Psal.* 25.

10. And lastly, What will you say of foolish Virgins? Are they prepared for the Eternal

Eternal World? Here are Virgins unready, suppose they represent Particular Churches, half had not Oil in their Vessels. What if you should be such? St. *Paul* telleth the Church of *Corinth*, *He had Espoused them as a chast Virgin to Christ*, and yet there were bad members among them. They were convinced Virgins, that made a profession, and kept themselves from gross pollution, *Matth.* 25. 1. They were sound in their Principles, no Hereticks, they expected Christ coming. They were in high Esteem, and did shine as Lights, their Lamps did burn, and they went on in Religion for a time. How many are pleas'd with the name or reputation of being Religious: they would be thought good, *Is thy heart right* (said *Jehu*) *as my heart is?* The wise Virgins thought well of them, and that they had been prepared. The Disciples thought well of *Judas*, and *Paul* of *Demas*; they were in a complaining condition, and sensible of the want of grace, and came for a supply to the wise Virgins, but 'twas too late. Lastly, their expectation was high, and their confidence held out to the last. They came boldly to the door, and pray'd for admission.

You

You have heard there is a numberleſs number unready, and truly you may as ſoon find ſweet Flowers growing upon the Sea, and Fiſh upon the Mountains, yea, Pearls upon the tops of Trees, as preparation for heaven in carnal hearts. Now to faſten this truth as a Nail in a ſure place, ask thy ſelf theſe queſtions, that thou mayſt know to which ſort thou belongeſt.

1. Queſt. *Am not I the poor blind ſoul whom the Goſpel ſaith is Loſt?*

2. Queſt. *Have I been ſavingly ſenſible of ſin, and the want of a Saviour? Did I ever taſt of Spiritual Grief or Godly Sorrow? Is ſin as a Talent of Lead, or as light as a Feather to me?*

3. Queſt. *Is not my name among the dead in Jeruſalem, and in the liſt of prodigious ſinners, who look like hell it ſelf?*

Read over the Catalogue of the ſins of the Fleſh, *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21. 1 *Cor.* 6 9, 10. And ſay, Are not theſe my ſins?

4. Queſt. *Am not I the man went out of* Babylon *to* Zion, *that ſet Sail for Heaven, and once ſeem'd a bright Star,* viz. *A forward, active, zealous Chriſtian, and diligent*

gent in Duties, now become a Comet? Where is my fervour and affection? Is not my latter end likely to be worse than the beginning? What is profession without progression?

5. Quest. Am not I an Idolatrous Worldling, whose name is written in Earth, and whose portion is in this Life, Psal. 17. 14. Luke 6. 24. Col. 3. 5. James 5. 1.

6. Quest. May not I be rank'd among the desperate Christ-rejecting sinners, over whose head Gods wrath hangs?

7. Quest. Do I hold no corrupt, dangerous, damnable opinion, contrary to the form of sound words, and the Doctrine of the Apostles and Martyrs? 2 Tim. 1. 14.

8. Quest. Do I not build upon the rotten sandy Foundation of mine own Righteousness? What beside my good Purposes, my Baptism, and some imperfect Performances, and vain hopes have I to satisfie God, and to entitle me to Heaven? Matth. 7. 22.

9. Quest. Do I not think it too soon to believe, love God, and live a strict pious life? Should I be a loser to part with my Lusts, and give my heart to Christ?

10. Quest. Am not I a foolish Virgin?

Let

2. 22. How many ſtrong and perillous Temptations are incident to youth? there is no ſuch glaſſy ſlippery Piece of way between you and Heaven as Youth. Beware, ſaith a Divine, of this green young Devil, the hot and fiery paſſions of Youth. That true Father in God, *John*, writes to young men who were Believers betimes. Youth and Grace, Chriſt and a young Man or a young Woman are a ſweet Couple (ſaith the ſame Author.) Old *Jacob* commanded his Sons to carry down to *Joſeph* the beſt Fruits of the Land of *Canaan*, *Gen.* 43. 11. This Primroſe or Spring-Flower of Grace and Vertue, will be very grateful to ſweet Jeſus. Young Men and young Women hearken to the advice of him who knew by ſweet experience how good it was to begin with God early, *Eccleſ.* 12. *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. The Kingdom of Heaven* (ſaith Chriſt) *is like a man that is an Houſholder, which went out early to hire Labourers into his Vineyard*, Mat. 22. 1. Will you in the *Aurora* or Golden-Morning of your Youth, go about your Maſters Work, or rather your own? Mine Offering are for a ſweet ſavour unto me (ſaith the Lord,) ye ſhall

obſerve

observe to offer in their season. The young Bullock, and Lambs of the first year are for the Lord, *Numb.* 28. The godly Child mentioned in the little Book, when it saw the Tokens of Death on it, cried out, I am mark't, death was welcome to it, being mark't for Christ, and ready for Heaven. Thou hast promised to be the Lords before this day, and a free-will offering vowed was not to be released, *Numb.* 30. The Daughters of *Zelophehad* (being young Virgins) sued for an Inheritance among their Brethren (*viz.*) to have a Lot in the Holy Land. Do you seek for an Inheritance among Believers in the better Country? Heaven is before you, and God bids you, as once *Abraham* and *Lot*, to make your choice; he expects it, who will requite your youthful kindness, *Jer.* 2. 2. No Wife to the Wife of the Youth. In the Morning resolve to sow the seed of Vertue, and thou shalt reap. *Sanctifie to me the First-born, saith the Lord.* Deal by the Soul as *Hannah* did with her Son, who gave him to the Lord. 'Tis the best time for such a designation; and if thou dost intend Heaven, remember who saith, *My Son give me thy heart*, Prov. 23. 26.

26. Be holy and thou ſhalt be accepted. Sinner, thou canſt not make too much haſt to Heaven. When did you hear a young woman being Eſpouſed to a Perſon, comely, rich, wiſe and honourable, ſay, It was too ſoon for ſuch an Advantage. Let this day be thy Marriage-day; Marriage is honourable, eſpecially this Marriage, it being to the Kings Son and Heir of Heaven. And if none have been converted that heard theſe Sermons. O that you that read them may be the Firſt-fruits, *Exod.* 34. 26. *Micah* 7. 1. *Rom.* 15. 5. It hath bin and is the beſt ſight in *England*, and in our Aſſemblies, to ſee ſo many young faces towards Heaven, ready to go in with Chriſt. To perſwade you to beſtow the dew of your Youth on Chriſt, and that your reſolution for heaven may as a mighty torrent carry down all before it,

Take theſe Incentives,

1. The Church is called a Virgin, Chriſt the Bridegroom, and the flouriſhing Age of Youth muſt be the beſt time to make this Match. The Birds chuſe their Mates in the Spring; the young Bees, when thruſt out by the old Ones, work in the Summer for Honey in the Winter. The Mar-

riages

riages of the Aged, when Men ſhould think of a Grave, are wondred at; and ſomewhat rare. Sinner, the time of Youth is the choiceſt and fitteſt ſeaſon for thy Soul. Now, thine affections, *viz.* Deſire, Love, Joy, Delight, (the wings and feet of thy ſoul, to carry thee to the arms and boſom of Chriſt) are ripe and flouriſh. While thy Love is warm, ſtrong, and all thy ſenſes and faculties quick, lively, active, place them on ſweet Jeſus. Timouſneſs or Priority we muſt have ever reſpect unto in this grand Affair; as the Woman came to Chriſts Grave early, *Luke* 24. 1. ſo early muſt we get Grace. How excellent is it for a young Man, or Maid, to have ſuch a ſpring of Grace as to invite Chriſt to come and dwell with him, *Cant.* 4. *ult.* The Owner of the Garden delights to ſee the young Plants Bud, Bloſſom, and bear fruit, *Cant.* 6. 11. To trade with God for the Oil of Grace, and to prepare for Heaven early, is the richeſt Trade in the World. Say with him who was pious in his Youth, and could tell what God had done for his ſoul, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee*, Pſal. 63. 1. 73. 25. Do as the Primitive

Primitive Christians, who gave themselves to the Lord, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. It may be thou art poor in the World, and hast not Gold Frankincense and Myrrh to offer unto thy God, nor a thousand Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oil, yet thou hast an Heart which is a Present for a Prince, a Gift for the Great God. *Lord, such as I have I give thee*; and 'tis thine own, my body and my soul I resign to thee, *Rom.* 12. 1. This is the Male; do not bring the blind, the lame, and the maimed, lest he say to thee, as to those sacrilegious Persons, *Go offer it to thy Governour, see whether he will accept of it*; where thou hast spent the best of thy Floure, bestow thy Bran. Let the World, Flesh and Devil, that have had thy Youth, have the snuffs and dregs of old Age too. Sinner, stay till old Age, and no thanks to part with thy sins; sin will leave thee; when the Oil is wasted the Lamp will go out. Then stand forth young man, and say to God as *Ahab* to *Benhadad*, *I am thine and all that I have.* My head and my heart is thine, my feet, and my hands, and all is thine. My heart is thine to love thee, my head is thine to plot for thee, my hands shall work

work for thee, my feet shall go for thee, my tongue shall speak to thee and for thee. If I had a thousand hearts, Lord, thou shouldst have them all. This is to honour him with thy First-fruits, *Prov.* 3. 9. *James* 1. 16.

2. Break off from the Devil and Sin early, and gather up this heavenly hidden *Mannah* of Divine Grace in the Morning, and go forward, and thou wilt be a Mother in *Israel*, or a Father in Gods Family. The new born Babe, will come to be a young man, and a young man a Father. The hot fiery Lust of Youth is the Devil in his Flowers, (saith one) in Youth the Devil finds dry Sticks, and dry Coals, and an Hearth Stone, and how soon can he with his Flint cast fire, and with his Bellows blow it up and fire the House. Therefore get Grace betimes into the Garrison of thy heart, that thou mayest be able to repel his hellish temptations. 'Tis Christs delights to be early in the Vineyard, *Cant.* 7. 12. Trees that Blossom in the Spring, are most fruitful and most useful. God made choice of the *Almond*-Tree ('tis said) becaufe it

Bloſſomed firſt. When the Image of Heaven is ſtampt early upon a mans ſoul, ſuch ordinarily attain great eminency in Grace and Holineſs, *Moſes*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Daniel*, *Timothy*, began with God betime, and were in the upper Form in Gods School, and Stars of the firſt Magnitude. *Obadiah* feared the Lord from his youth, and how uſeful was he? *Firſt Seek the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matth. 6. 33. 'Tis an honour to be firſt in Chriſt, and firſt converted in a Town or Family. But to be the firſt Drunkard, the firſt Adulterer, the firſt Perſecutor, or the firſt inventer of fantaſtick, diſguiſed Faſhions, and wicked Practices, deſerves to be branded with infamy and reproach. Seniority or Priority in the faith and true Piety, is a praiſe, *Rom.* 6. 5. *Salute* Andronicus *and* Junia *who are of Note*, (ſaith *Paul*) and *were in Chriſt before me.* Whereas to be a young Sabbath-breaker, a young Fornicator, a young Thief, a young Atheiſt, is a horrible ſhame and ignominy. On the contrary, to be firſt in Gods fear and favour, and to have early experience of Chriſts Love, is both commendable and comfortable.

3. Delay

3. Delay is the ſad Character of the wicked Servant, and very deceitful and dangerous for thy Soul, *Matth.* 24. 48. To linger and procraſtinate in a matter of this moment, is a trick and cheat of the Old Serpent to undo thee for ever. *To day*, to day, ſaith the great Landlord and Limitter of our time. To morow, hereafter, (ſaith the Devil) to whoſe voice, Sinner, wilt thou liſten, to God, or the Devil? *Haſte, for thy life, ſtay not*, ſaid the Angel to *Lot*; if he had ſtayed a little longer he had been burn'd. Will you by delays pleaſe the Devil, and make whips and ſtings for your ſelves, treaſure up wrath, this is to add to the Heap, and bring fewel to the fire, that muſt burn upon thee to Eternity. But what need ſuch haſte? the Thief went from the Croſs to the Crown the ſame day. Do not truſt to that, it was but one Thief, and he a Prodigy, and truly penitent. Suppoſe God ſhould ſay to thee that art young, as once *Joſeph* to his Brethren, *Except your younger Brother come with you, ye ſhall not ſee my Face*; if thou doſt not ſerve, fear and obey me in thy youth, thou ſhalt never obtain my favour. Trees that Bloſſom not till *Autumn*,

afford little Fruit. The Inhabitants of *China* marry their Children very young, to prevent their Debauchery. I will not ſay of the hoary-Head, there is no hope, becauſe ſome few in the Evening, or ſeventh hour, have been called and come to Chriſt: But with fear and trembling, conſider, thou that ſayſt to day it is too ſoon, to morrow may with anguiſh of ſoul cry out it is too late. 'Tis good for a man to bear the Yoke in his Youth, *i. e.* Chriſts Yoke, not the Devils Yoke, whoſe Slaves and Drudges he will make you, until he damn you. What a grief is it, that youthful ſins and old bones ſhould meet in the Grave, *Job* 28. 11.

4. Divine Precepts and Promiſes are to the preſent time, none for hereafter. The Imperative Mood hath no Future Tenſe. Seeking out of ſeaſon hath had no ſucceſs. While *Eſau* was hunting, he loſt the bleſſing. *Many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able. While they went to buy the Bridegroom came, ſeek the Lord while he may be found*, Iſa. 55. 7. Prov. 8. 17. Are not the ſhadows of the evening ſtretched out over ſome of you? Gray hairs are here and there, they will tell you the night

night is near: Look up you old and young Loyterers, and see whether your Morning-Sun is not past its Meridian, yea, near its setting. Dost thou not see many young men die, and go before thee to the Grave? Art thou certain of another day? Will not God reckon with thee for so rich a Talent, and treasure of time put into thy hand? What meanest thou, O sluggard, O sleeper, awake, arise, pray, prepare, that thou perish not. Thy Lord intends to come; how wilt thou fear and tremble to look him in the Face, and thy work not done! Sinner, go home and mourn over this great and irreparable loss, the loss of thy precious time. And now before death draweth the black shade over thee, set all things at rights betwixt God and thy soul. And if thy soul and heaven depend upon an inch of time, do not wast it for a World.

5. To know, fear, love and serve God in our Youth, is the best comfort of Old Age. A young Saint, and an old Angel; is a true saying.

Here I subjoyn Motives for Saints and

ſinners to prepare; and means and directi-
ons in order to it.

1. *Mo.* Conſider with greateſt ſeri-
ouſneſs the ſure paſſing excellency, dig-
nity, and glory of the Perſon, for whoſe
ſweet and delightful preſence thou muſt
prepare. Here I am at a loſs, and know
not how to think, ſpeak, or write of this
infinite, matchleſs, and tranſcendent beauty
and glory of Chriſt. Which will keep
all created tongues of Men and Angels in
exerciſe and buſie, night and day to ſpeak
of it. Now if you would have a Glimpſe
of this glorious One, view his Titles, and
hear what a true Character they give of
him, who have ſeen him, not face to face,
but through a Glaſs darkly. Chriſtians,
you are invited to ſee this King, and Son
of the higheſt in his Glory, *Cant.* 3. 11.
Go ye forth, O ye Daughters of Zion, *and
behold King* Solomon, *with the Crown
wherewith his Mother crowned him, in the
day of his Eſpouſals.* Chriſt appeared to
John in wonderful Luſtre and Majeſty,
cloathed with a Garment down to the
ground, girt with a golden Girdle, his
Head and his Hair white as ſnow, his Eyes
as a flame of Fire, his Countenance as the
Sun

Sun shining in his strength, *Rev.* 1. 13, 14. O what a fair One, what an only One, what an excellent, lovely, ravishing One is Christ! Put the beauty of ten thousand Worlds of Paradices, like the Garden of *Eden*, put all Trees, all Flowers, all Smells, all Colours, all Tasts, all Joys, all Sweetness, all Loveliness in one. O what a fair excellent thing would it be! and yet it should be less to the dearest and fairest, beloved, then one drop of rain to the whole Sea, Lakes, Rivers and Fountains of ten thousand Earths, (saith a famous Divine). The Church, who had the most acquaintance with this King of Glory, affirms, *He is altogether lovely*, Cant. 5. 10. And do you expect his Company and Presence in Heaven, and not prepare? If a man be to eat with the Ruler, he will make himself ready. *Joseph* shaved himself, and put off his Prison-garments when he was to appear in *Pharoahs* Presence. Is it fit Swine should come into a Kings Presence-Chamber? The Maids that went into *Ahasuerus* were for six Months to be purified with Oil of Myrrh, and sweet Odors; Art thou a filthy Swine, or Goat, and durst come before the King of

Glory. *His Wife hath made her self ready*, Rev. 19.7, 8. Friend, doſt thou love, and look for Chriſt, and pleaſe thy ſelf with the thoughts of ſeeing of him, and not caſt off thy ſins [redacted] *Peter* expreſſeth his love to his Lord, by profeſſing he was not only ready to go to Priſon, but to die for his ſake, *Luke* 22. 33. Was *Peter* and *Paul* ready to ſuffer and die for Chriſt, and will you not make ready to live and reign with Chriſt, in heaven for ever.

---

2. *Mo.* The red Dragon and Old Serpent the Devil, that deſigns thy Eternal woe. Makes it his main buſineſs to hinder this work, therefore make ready. *Tobiah* and *Sanballat* were not ſo buſie to retard, and hinder the building of *Jeruſalem* and Temple, as the Devil is to hinder thy preparation for heaven. He hath his Devices, his Wiles, his Depths, and all imployed to impede and obſtruct this work. Here I ſhall endeavour to detect ſome of the ſtratagems of this active and malicious Adverſary the Devil.

Q. *How doth Satan hinder this Work?*

Anſw.

Answ. 1. By suggesting delays and putting off our duty: and to this end he will perswade,

1. Though it may and must be done, it is too soon, another season is better then the present time.

2. That there is no life so sweet as a life of sin and sensuality.

3. That preparation for heaven is a short and easie work, and may be done hereafter, or when we will. Sinner, if thou dost think it easie to repent, believe, and change thy heart, and secure heaven at any time. Let me ask thee, Canst make an other World, and keep the whole Laws? Canst raise the dead, or live here for ever? Thou mayst do one as well as the other.

2. By withdrawing men from the use of powerful and awaking means, in which they may meet with Christ and be converted.

3. By representing the difficulty and impossibility of a strict and pious life. To insinuate and fasten this temptation, the Devil will make men believe,

1. That there is no absolute necessity of such preciseness,

2. That men may live ill, and die well. Go in the way to Hell, and come to Heaven.

3. That no man can live such a life, if so, 'tis a sad, pensive life, and no way Eligible, or to be chosen.

4. By raising prejudice and evil thoughts in mens minds against the Preachers and Professors of the Gospel: such as these:

1. That the best are not so good towards God, as they seem to the World, but false and counterfeit.

2. That thy sin is secret, and in corners, though not openly, and in the face of the Sun: And because of the grosser faults, and miscarriage of some, and the weaknesses, infirmities, and passions of others, they will think well of none. Here note, 'tis a cursed design of Hell, to put bad men upon the profession of Religion on purpose to disgrace it, and render it odious to the World.

5. By abusing and misapplying the Doctrine of Election and Predestination, so as to infer and draw from it, wild and desperate conclusions.

6. By suggesting to poor desponding souls,

ſouls, that the day of Grace, and time of preparation for Heaven is over.

7. By corrupting and poyſoning mens Judgments with heretical and damnable Opinions and Principles. There's many a mans head hath brought him to hell. To inſtance,

1. That Scripture is not of Divine Authority; That the World was from Eternity; That Religion is a meer Fiction; That Regeneration, Faith, Repentance, Communion with Chriſt is but moral vertue; That Men may be ſaved of any Religion; That Hell is a Bug-bear, and Heaven a Fools Paradiſe. But let God and his Word be true, and every Blaſphemer a Liar.

8. By calming and quieting Mens Conſciences with an out-ſide and carnal Religion, and good purpoſes.

9. By propoſing falſe Grounds and Evidences for Heaven, *viz.* That Conviction, and legal Terror is Converſion, that an honeſt, civil, ſober life, without Chriſt and faith in him, will bring men to Heaven. Theſe are the Fig-leaves Men ſow together, who walk in the ſparks and light of their own fire, *Iſa.* 50.

10. By

10. By ſuggeſting the numberleſs number of non-Profeſſors, and theſe many of them honourable, rich, learned, wiſe men, and that it will be of dangerous conſequence openly to own & practiſe Religion, and therefore they cannot prepare for Chriſt, and purchaſe Heaven at ſo dear a rate. Sinner, let me tell thee, whatever Satan doth make thee believe, thou haſt no cauſe to take a Minute reſt, while unready.

Mo. 3. There are multitudes of careleſs ſouls (as you have heard) aſleep and ſecure, who will be ſadly diſappointed! tremble, leſt it ſhould be your caſe. *Woe to them that are at eaſe in* Zion. Carnal ſecurity, riſing from ſelf-ignorance, ſelf-righteouſneſs, and hope of future repentance, is a ſecret Enemy, like an Impoſthume, never manifeſting it ſelf, but when immediately killing. In the great Houſe of God the Church, are not only Veſſels of Gold, but of Wood, Earth and Stone, *ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour*, 2 Tim. 2. 20. There are who have not the title or name of Virgins, much leſs the nature. Some have not ſo much

much love to Christ and his Gospel as to profess it. They loath to be in company with the sincere Saints of Christ, neither will they take any pains for their immortal souls, but wholly neglect the performing of those duties, and gaining those Graces necessary for preparation. The Children of the great King, and Favourites of Heaven do make ready: let this be as a goad in your side to provoke and quicken you. The Vessels of the Temple for sacred use, were pure polished Vessels: Christians, you are designed to stand in Gods Presence, to see his Face, and lodge in his bosom to Eternity: therefore you must not love and follow whom you please. *The Kings Daughter is glorious within, and her Clothing is of wrought Gold, she shall be brought to the King in Rayment of Needle-work, and the Virgins her Companions follow her*, Psal. 45. 13, 14. Sons and Daughters must be received, when dogs and swine are shut out. *Hagar* and *Ishmael* are turned out, *Sarah* and *Isaac* stay in the Family. Now, sensual, secure sinner, whose example wilt thou follow? the Devils herd, or those instances and patterns of Piety that make ready,

1 *Cor.* 11. 1, *Phil.* 3. 17. Great *Alexander* being asked, *Whether he would exercise himself in the* Olympian *Games?* Answered, *Yea, if I may run with Kings.* The Saints of the most high are honourable persons, and prepare and run with them for this Crown and Kingdom. *Here is the Race, above is the Crown,* said *Ignatius* the Martyr. *Run and get the Prize,* said Mr. *Bradford* to his Fellow-sufferers.

Mo. 4. Think upon the present, future, and unspeakable advantage of Preparation for Heaven; Get an assurance of going in with Christ to eternal fellowship, and you need not fear. No Man or Woman can possibly get above the dread of Death and Hell, without a well-grounded hope of Heaven. The thoughts of a sick-bed, and death, the last enemy, will be a stab to the soul unready. What tremblings and shiverings of heart, and perturbation of spirit, doth the thoughts of the Chambers of Death cause, till a man can say, 'Tis better for him to die then to live. When a man can reflect upon

upon the Grace and Image of God in him, and sees his title to Heaven clear, it will prevent Armies of fear, and Legions of doubts. *Now 'tis no more for me to die then to close mine eyes*, said a godly Minister, When a man carries his Evidences for Heaven in his heart and hand, he will be chearful, and content with a small pittance of the World. A holy poor Woman, whose Fare was often but bread and water, said, *She would not change her condition for the greatest Lady in the Land.* Mr. *Jordan* of *Exeter*, (to excite his Neighbours to make sure for Heaven) was wont to say, *Brown-bread and Kennel-water was good Fare, with an Assurance of Heaven.* When a Christian considers what he hath is by Covenant with Christ, and be it more or less, 'tis for his good and best for him: How refreshing and comfortable is a little? I might have bin wealthy and wicked, and eat the fat, drink the sweet, and enjoy many outward comforts, and no Christ. I might have had a Farm, a Mannor, rich Apparel, delicate Fare, many Servants and Attendants, but Sins, Snares, and the Curse of God on all, and at last have

gone

gone to Hell. Moreover, the Assurance of going in with Christ will deaden the heart to the World, and make a man willing to leave all for Christ; yea, it will reconcile a godly man to the sharpest Providences, and severest stroke of Gods Hand. It will make a Christian suffer willingly, and bear the Cross patiently and comfortably. When that great Sufferer look'd up to his exceeding eternal weight of Glory, his afflictions seemed light. The hope of Heaven will lighten and sweeten any Affliction, *Heb.* 10. 34. *Latimer* rejoyced when his Bishoprick was taken from him, Dr. *Taylor* leapt for joy when going to be burned, *If you lessen or abate any thing of my sufferings*, (said the Martyr) *it will be to my loss.* At *Stratford-Bowe* were burned in Queen *Maries* days, at one stake, a lame man and a blind man. The lame man, after he was chained, cast away his Crutch, bade the blind man, *Be of good comfort, for death would heal them both*; so they patiently suffered with a calm and sedate mind. Again, Preparation for Heaven will make a Man go singing in the way of the Lord, and cause our duties to flow from us like water

from

from a Fountain; and free-will offerings are always best and most grateful to God. In fine, due Preparation for going in with Christ, will be an effectual means to prevent that active adversary the Devil, who improves all opportunities and advantages against Gods poor people, especially their weaknesses, when they are brought low in body and mind too. 'Tis said of the natural Serpent, *Non nisi moriens in longam producitur*, he is never at his full length till dying. When a godly man is dying, the old Serpent shews himself, lets out his sting, but an Assurance of Gods favour will quench his fiery darts.

Mo. 5. Christs long absence, Gods unwearied patience, and all the calls, threatnings, warnings and alarms of the Word are, that men should make ready for him, and escape the wrath that is to come. Why are means and Ministers continued, and the offers of Grace by the Gospel renewed, but to bring Souls over unto Christ, and safe to Heaven? He sent forth other Servants, *Matth.* 22. The first in the Morning, others at the sixth, ninth and eleventh

eleventh hour. Why is the Cry at midnight, but to raise and rouze up the sleepier Virgins to make Ready? There are four Cries God makes use on, to startle and awaken men to mind their souls business.

1. The first is, the cry or voice of the Spirit, which is a more secret and still voice to excite us unto our duty. The Holy Ghost saith, *To day, The Spirit saith, Come, Rev. ult.*

2. There is the cry of the Word. *This is as the Voice of the Trumpet,* Isa. 58. 1. *John the Baptist* was a Cryer. *Go and cry in the Ears of* Jerusalem, *said the Lord*, Jer. 2. 2.

3. There's the cry of the Rod. *The Lords Voice cried unto the City* Samaria, *Hos.*

4. There is also the cry of Conscience. All which serve to prompt us to our duty, and prepare us for Eternity. Christ had kindled the fire upon the Earth, and burnt it, and set up his Tribunal, and sounded the Trumpet of Judgment long before, but that he is willing to save undone sinners, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *His long-suffering to us-ward, is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance.*

Mora

Mora ſponſi pœnitentiæ tempus eſt.

The delay of the Bridegroom, is the time of repentance. There's not a Sabbath-day, nor a Sacrament-day, nor a Sermon-day, after the Judgment-day. Now God warns by his Judgments, waits to be gracious, calls by his Miniſters, ſtrives by his Spirit: and you may be welcome to him. And upon your Repentance, and cloſing with Chriſt, you ſhall be juſtified, pardoned, accepted, and taken into the marriage, and Crowned: But ſtay a little longer, and the Door is ſhut, and then all your prayers, cries, tears, will be fruitleſs. O ſinner, ariſe; make haſte and return unto the Lord before it be too late.

---

6. Mo. Chriſts coming will be certain, and you know not how ſoon, his Word is ſure. The ungodly Carnal World will be ſwallowed up, and drowned in ſenſuality before that day, as it was in the days of *Noah*, and many Profeſſors will be careleſs and ſecure: *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his Promiſe.* The pro-

promiſe to *Adam* of the Seed of the Woman, was many hundred years before Chriſts Incarnation, who in the fulneſs of time came. 'Tis now more then ſixteen hundred years ſince his going in Triumph, from Earth to Heaven: And though he ſeemeth long or late before he comes, he will certainly come at laſt.

Q. *But to whom doth the coming of the Lord ſeem long?*

Anſw. 1. Chriſts coming ſeems long to Atheiſtical mockers, who ſay, *Where is the Promiſe of his coming?* 2 Peter 3. 3. 4.

2. To his ſuffering Members. Their cry to Vindictive Juſtice is, *Lord, how long?* Pſal. 94 3. *Revel.* 6. 10. If theſe dayes of ſin and miſery ſhould not be ſhortned, no Fleſh could be ſaved.

3. Chriſts coming is long to paſſionate Lovers, who prize his Preſence, and long to ſee his Perſon: *Haſte, my Beloved*, ſaid the longing Spouſe. But count upon it, he will not fail in coming. 'Tis the great Article of our Creed, *That Chriſt ſhall come to judge the quick and the*

the dead. Moreover, he told his tender-hearted, and dearly beloved Disciples, (who were sad at the tiding of his going from them) he would come and see them again. And he hath, according to his Promise, ever since sent another to supply his room, to teach, refresh and comfort them until he comes, and to keep the recent memory of him in their minds. He hath also once and again presented himself to the view of his suffering Saints, as ready to come and avenge their cause for them, *Acts* 7. 55. *Rev.* 1. 13, 18. And he hath often met them in his Ordinances, and holy Appointments, as an Answer of their holy Prayers; *He is come*, saith the Martyr; Many a token of his love, comfortable converse, and sweet meeting with Christ his Church hath had already, all which assures and tells us, that he will be with us in a little time, *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*, Heb. 10.

2. Quest. *But how will he come? and why will he come?*

Answ. First, He will come Personally.

Secondly,

Secondly, He will come with Perſpicuity.

Thirdly, He will come with Power and Infinite Majeſty.

Fourthly, He will come ſuddenly and unexpectedly.

1. Chriſtians, your dear Lord Jeſus Chriſt will come perſonally. He will not only employ and ſend forth his glorious Attendants, their miniſtring Spirits the Angels, but come himſelf: He longed to come to his Croſs to redeem us from Hell, he muſt needs love to appear with his Crown to fetch us to Heaven, *I will come unto you, &c.* It will be ſaid unto you, to the comfort and raviſhment of your ſouls, *Behold, the Bridegoom cometh, go ye forth to meet him.* The ſame that ſuffered and aſcended for you, ſhall appear the ſecond time without ſin unto ſalvation, *John* 14. 3. *Acts* 1. 11. *Heb.* 9. 28. Chriſts Perſon laid up in Heaven is our hope, *Col.* 1. 4. Take the Perſon of the Mediatour out of the holy Scripture, and 'tis a Cabinet without a Jewel. Take the Sun out of the Firmament, and it's a dark Curtain. Chriſt is all, and in all; and what is Heaven if Chriſt were not

not, there? The King makes the Court.

Secondly, Christ will come with wonderful and amazing Perspicuity, and to the view of the whole World at once. There were but few that saw him in the Manger, not many saw him in the Garden, in his Agony and bloody Sweat; Or on the Cross between two Thieves, with his hands nailed, and his side pierced; but when he comes again, every Eye shall see him. Men shall not say (as now) *Lo, here is Christ, or Lo, there is Christ, for as the Lightning that cometh out of the East, and shineth to the West, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be,* Mat. 24. 27. Note, Christ is called the Son of Man, for he hath his humane Nature still: *I am he that was dead, and am now alive, and I live for evermore*; And though few in comparison were Spectators of him at his Crucifixion and Ascension, when he shall be on the Throne all shall behold him, *Rev.* 1, 7. *Behold, he cometh with Clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: And all Kin-*

reds

reds of the Earth shall wail because of him: even so. Amen. Christs appearance will be a sad sight to two sorts of men:

1. To those who do not believe in his Person.

2. To his bold and audacious Adversaries, that violate his Commands, and oppose his Regal Authority, *Bring forth these mine Enemies, and slay them before me.*

Thirdly, Christ will come with Power and infinite Majesty, for he hath all Power both in Heaven and in Earth, *Mat.* 28. 18. *chap.* 24. 30. *John* 17. 2. His first coming and appearance was mean, as a man, in the form of a servant, *as a Root out of a dry ground*, and his Countenance more marred then any mans, *Isa.* 52. 14. *Isa.* 53. 2, 3. *Therefore they despised and rejected him, spit on him, reproached him, arraigned condemned him, crowned him with thornes, and crucified him.* In the state of humiliation he was attended with poor despicable Fishermen, and a company of weak contemptible women, not many wise or noble, or of the Rulers believed

in

on him. But when he ſhall appear the ſecond time, 'twill be with Power and great Glory, as a King in Triumph or mighty Monarch; We read that *Agrippa* and *Bernice* with great Pomp came to the place of Judgment, *Acts* 25. 23. So will this great Judge, the Man Chriſt Jeſus come, when attended with innumerable Company of Angels, and ten thouſand of his Saints, *Matth.* 25. 31. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his Glory*: Jude 14. *And* Enoch *alſo, the Seventh from* Adam, *prophecied of theſe, ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his Saints.* 1 Theſſ. 4. 16, 17. *For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trumpet of God: and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt. Then we which are alive, and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air; and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord.*

4. He will come ſuddenly, as a Thief in the night. When men are ſecure, there

will be a cry at Midnight. *When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find Faith in the Earth?* few or none will believe his coming is so near. *Of that day knoweth no man, but my Father only*, saith Christ, *Mat.* 24. 36. *Be ye therefore ready, for in such an hour, as you think not, the Son of Man cometh*, Mat. 24. 44. And if thou art a Carnal Worldling, or a formal sleepy pretender to Christ, thou wilt be undone, undone Everlastingly.

Q. *Why will Christ come?*

Answ. 1. By his Fathers appointment and designation, he is ordained Judge of the World. Christian, thy Lord Jesus is the Lord Judge. *The Father hath committed all Judgment to the Son*, John 5. 22. *Acts* 17. 31. *Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath rais'd him from the dead.* God hath highly exalted him, *viz.* above the Grave by his Resurrection, above the Earth by his Ascension, above the Heavens by his Session at the Fathers Right Hand. He shall be sent of God as Judge: judgment hath not been fully Executed in any

any one Age of the World, *Eccl.*3.16. 5.8. That of the Old World reserved a cursed *Cham* in the *Ark*, But the last Judgment is called *The Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God*, Rom. 2. 5.

2. Christs Truth, Faithfulness, Affection obliges him to come, he cannot falsifie his Word, *I will come*, saith Christ, nothing of Gods Word ever failed, *Josh.*23.4,14. Christ hath an infinite affection to his little Flock in the World: Love and Pity brought him from Heaven to Earth at first, and love will constrain him to return; his going hence, or change of place hath made no change in Christs heart. When *Lazarus* was sick and dead, Christ must come, and raise him to life, because he loved him. So also all that are dead in the Lord, he will come and raise. Believers are Christs Brethren, his Sister, his Spouse, he will come for his own Bride. The Bridegrooms departure was not upon a difference, or divorce, he did not leave his Bride with a purpose to return no more. When he went to heaven he left his heart here, and will come to present to himself a glorious Church. *Joseph* was sent before into

Egypt, to provide for his Fathers Family before they came to him: Jesus hath made all ready, the Presence-Chamber is prepared, therefore the Marriage must be consummate, and the Lambs Wife put into actual possession of the everlasting Kingdom. And it is the true Character of Saints to love, and desire Christs coming, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.* O how often should Christians look to that Princely Palace from whence Christ must come: and speak in the Language of a singular Saint, *O fairest among the Sons of Men, why stayest thou so long away?* O Heaven move fast, time run away, hasten the Marriage-day; For love is tormented with delay.

---

3. Again the Saints full Redemption, compleat and perfect Salvation will not be till that day. When your deareſt and affectionate Lord shall appear, your joy shall be full. Here with *Paul* they complain of their body of death, and sigh, and

and groan under their burthen and bondage. Then their cry will be *Redemption, Redemption.*

Laſtly, Chriſt will come for the Conviction, and eternal confutation of the Devil and his Inſtruments, who mock at ſerious Piety, and the Doctrine of Chriſts coming. When Chriſt ſhall appear, their Mouths will be ſtopt, and ſhame and contempt will fall upon them for ever. Here the Tares and the Wheat, the Sheep and the Goats, the foolish Virgins and the wiſe are together.

As the Raven and the Dove, the Lion and the Lamb were in the *Ark*: Then they ſhall be ſeparated. The Harveſt is the End of the World. The concluſion and end of each Generation of men, is as a particular Harveſt. This will be a huge, general and ultimate Harveſt; the Harveſt brings all the fruits in the Fields of this World to ripeneſs and maturity; bad men will be ripe for ruine, Saints for Glory. Then the Reapers, and Grain-gatherers will come forth, and every Proprietor takes to his own. *Belzebub*, and his helliſh train will appear, that have lain

close and covert, and the blessed Angels will come forth also: the Reapers are the Angels: The Devil will come, glean, and gather in this Field, and take to his own. And God will take to his own. The Husbandmen have their home-Harvest. Satan hath his home, his house, his prison, and all that have the Devils mark must be haled to his home: and Gods Jewels and choice Grain must be gathered and carried to their Fathers House and Garner of Glory. God and the Devil will divide the whole World. O how will the Devils roar, cry and exult, when they shall have so great a crop, *viz.* so many Millions of Men and Women, they will cry Home, Home; these are mine, and must abide with me in my prison; then the Devil and his retinue shall be sent down, down, down to Hell together.

Motive 7. Consider what multitudes of Men and Women are going down the swift torrent of time, which emptieth it self into the lake and gulf of Eternity. Secure soul, open thine eyes wide, and look abroad to see how thick Gods deadly Arrows

Arrows flie and do Execution every day. What various and mortal Diseases are there in the World. Many are sick, weak, dying, and going to their long home. We are posting daily to the shore of Death and bars of the Pit, and most have their faces toward the bottomless Pit, and place of endless Woe. Wretched and sleepy soul, didst thou stand but one night or day at Hell-gate, and see what droves of ungodly men the Devils bring in, it would make thine heart and flesh to tremble. And didst thou hear what doleful cries and skreeks they make as they go down, and what cutting Acclamations and Triumphs the damned Spirits make, when the Master Beasts, the mighty Monarchs and Governours of the World come in, it would be worse then a Fire in thy Bones, or a Sword in thy Bowels. Read and dread what the Prophet *Isaiah* saith of the King of *Babel*, Isa. 14. 9, 10. *Hell from beneath is moved for thee at thy coming, it stirreth up the dead for thee.* But blessed be God some few holy resolved souls for Christ and Heaven have escaped this dreadful danger, and made ready for

the Marriage. Sinner, hast thou had the same means and opportunities, and done nothing? Know, thou hast but a day for it; stay till the day be ended, and thou art lost for ever. The servant went out to invite to the Marriage, told the Guests *All things were ready. I have finished the Work* (said Christ to his Father) *thou gavest me to do.* All things on Gods Part, on Christs Part are ready; Heaven is ready for thee, if Christ be formed in thee. Christ is waiting for thee, longing for thee, praying for thee, O then prepare speedily. Thou hast seen the marks and Messengers of Death in others faces, expect thy turn, who may be next in the Town, City, Parish, or Family carried to the Grave.

Mo. 8. And last of all, with fear and astonishment think upon the dismal and dreadful case and end of one that lives and dies, and goes to Eternity unready. Sinner, consider with what anguish, horrour, and consternation of spirit men go hence; if awakened and sensible of their doleful, damnable condition. For a man dying, and at the door of Eternity to look backward, and take a view of his cursed,

curſed, helliſh courſe and practice, and to turn his eyes inward upon his Soul, that is, a polluted Veſſel, without the Oil of Grace; and to ſee nothing but ſin, guilt, and all the beaſtly and impure abomination of heart and life, with his ſecret Cloſet-Villanies. And to look upward to that Chriſt, Heaven and Glory, which he hath forfeited by his wilful Impenitency, and refuſal of Mercy: And to look downward to the Grave where his body muſt rot, and to thoſe Devils and Reprobates in Hell who muſt be his company and Tormentors: This is tremendous, unleſs thou art like *Judas*, who heard Chriſt ſay, *Woe be to that man by whom the Son of man ſhall be betrayed, it had bin better he had never bin born.* O who can ſee ſuch a ſight, and not pluck off his hair, and tear his very bowels with rage and indignation, and wiſh he had never had a being, and a ſoul of ſuch inеſtimable worth, that muſt die and burn for ever. Was not this the condition of *Francis Spira*, and of another who ſaid, *She ſhall go down to Hell alive:* And it may be the caſe of ſome other convinced deſperate ſoul, whom the Lord leaves for

terrour to the secure World, who be as men hang'd up in Irons in the way to Hell; or as men risen from the dead, to tell others of the vanity and danger of their sinful courses. For a man to look on time past, and see that gone for ever, and look on time present as just come to its period, and his account not ready, his Lamp gone out, his short heaven on earth concluded, his conscience biting and tearing like a Lion, and summoning him to the Bar of Justice, his Body dying, his Passing-Bell tolling, Curtains drawn, Physicians and Friends taking their leaves of him, Sermons, Counsels, Ministry and all means of doing good to soul or body ended: the Vault, Tomb or Grave ready to be opened to receive the filthy Karkass. The damned Devils waiting, gaping to receive and carry the soul down to the dark Dungeon, and fiery Lake. And never to have any other company or comforts but wicked Devils, and they insulting over thee everlastingly with hellish spite, and stinging exprobation, for neglecting so great salvation all thy long life, and loling heaven for some base lust, pride and vanity; O the horror!

Look

Look also to Doomsday, and there they see and hear the Earth burning, the Elements melting, Stars falling, the Trumpet sounding, Dead rising, Kings and Captains, bond and free, crying out, O Rocks fall on us, O Fire burn us, O Water drown us, O wild Beasts devour us, O Graves cover and hide us from the Wrath of Him, whose Blood and Bowels we have slighted. Will not this awaken?

Sinner, is it so? O then come, now Christ calls, and do not cast away mercy, and make thy self miserable. Refuse Christ and his Grace, and whilst thou livest thou art a cursed Creature, and when thou diest thou shalt be a damned Creature.

What sayst thou to this, thou time-losing and Christ-rejecting Wretch? Is there another World, or is there not? hast thou a soul, or no soul? Is there a blessed life of Communion and Fellowship with Christ or no? Is it worth the seeking after and praying for, or no? Wilt thou resolvedly set about the Work of preparing, and not give over till thou art ready for Christ, or wilt thou sit still and do nothing? and leave thine eternal condition

dition at uncertainties? Is it a trifle to thee, or a thing indifferent whether thou haſt a Chriſt, or no Chriſt? a Heaven or no Heaven? Whether thou haſt an eternal felicity above, or eternal flames below? How will thy ſpirit fail, and thy heart recoil at the ſight and appearance of Eternity?

But if this be a ſcarcrow, or ſome invented fable, or dream of a Melancholy fancy. Come ſinner, *Let us go down to* Tophet, that is, *in the Valley of the ſon of Hinnom*, and look into the Chambers of darkneſs, and lay thine Ear to the door of thine infernal priſon; and hear what they ſay, whoſe dolorous cries and cutting complaints are enough to rend the hardeſt rocks. With one voice they roar out and ſay, What we ſee and ſuffer is the woful and bitter fruit and effect of the ſweet pleaſures of ſin when we were in the World. This is the fire in our boſom, and hot coals that burn us. If the ſpirits in priſon, and damned in Hell ſhall tell thee, hear what they ſay in their ſeveral complaints, how they cry out of the principal and inſtrumental cauſes of their damnation.

1. My

1. My neglect of glorious Gospel-Grace, sleighting and rejecting Salvation offered in Christ, and putting off repentance, hath undone my soul. Christ called and knocked at the door of my heart often, but I would not open to him; now he hath shut the gate of Mercy on me for ever.

2. My worldlineſs, covetouſneſs, earthly-mindedneſs; I was mad upon the World, this is my woe and utter undoing.

3. My curſing, ſwearing, lying, blaſphemy, perjury, falſe witneſs damn'd my ſoul, *Zech.* 5. 4.

4. My frowardneſs, paſſion, ambition, pride and haughtineſs ſent me to hell.

5. My unfruitfulneſs, barrenneſs, unprofitableneſs under the means of Grace was my deſtruction.

6. My indulging the fleſh in drunkenneſs, gluttoney, wantonneſs, uncleanneſs, ruin'd me. This was the dart that went through my Liver.

7. My uncharitableneſs, hatred, backbiting, malice, envy, revenge, brought me to Hell.

8. Mur-

8. Murder, Theft, false Weights and Measures, cozening Widows, Orphans, eating the bread of wickedness, and drinking the Wine of violence was my damnation. Murder is a sin that always bleeds afresh in the Eyes of God.

9. My stubbornness, wilfulness, disobedience to my Parents, not hearkning to their Counsels, Admonitions, Reproofs, caused me to perish.

10. My Unrighteousness, Injustice, Bribery, Usury, Oppression, Extortion destroyed my Soul.

11. My enticing infectious Companions in sin, and secret night-wickedness, was my ruine.

12. The ill example of my Tutor, School-Master, Minister, Landlord, whom I feared and followed for some base ends, was my undoing.

13. Spending my precious time in vain, childish Sports, as Hawking, Hunting, Carding, Dicing, Play-houses, when I should have been Reading, Praying, was fatal to my Soul.

14. My irreligious, foolish, fond, wicked Parents, who delighted in trimming and adorning my Body, and took no care

of

of my soul, but let me have my will, and did not restrain me, instruct and Catechise me, were my destroyers.

15. My marrying and living in such a Family, where was no Religion, my being of such a Calling, where were so many snares and temptations, and my Friends sending me for the gain of the World beyond the Seas, where I had not the means of Salvation, but wickedness and debauchery winked at, - laid the foundation of my damnation.

16. My Knowledge, Learning, Parts, (my head being better then my heart) lifted me up, made me forget God, was the Trap and Gin by which the Devil caught my Soul.

17. My idleness, sloth, Sabbath-breaking, and neglecting the most weighty Duties, was my ruine. If I had been as serious and diligent in Duties, as often under the Ordinances, and on my Knees, as my Wife or Husband, my Child or Servant, I might have bin saved.

18. My Greatness and Prosperity in the World, as Honor, Offices, Riches, were my ruine; if I had bin poor, I should have minded Heaven.

19. My

19. My erroneous head and deluded heart, my Hereſie and diſtractive Opinions, caſt me down to Hell. We have a uſeful Book, called *The Book of Martyrs*; and if a Collection were made of the horrid and prodigious Opinions now in *England*, it may be called *A Book of Monſters*. *Polycarpus* called *Marcion The Heretick*, *the Firſt-born of the Devil*.

Novi te eſſe Primogenitum Satanæ.

20. My cowardiſe, carnal compliance, back-ſliding, being willing to ſave my ſtake, hath debauched my Conſcience and undone me.

21. My truſting to Lamps, common Grace, ſecurity, preſumption, ſelf-righteouſneſs, ſecret Hypocriſie, brought me to this place of burning.

O what fools and how mad were we, who were often told of theſe things, and this curſed place, and would take no warning! O, what a doleful Priſon is this! Here we be alwayes dying, and never dead. Here are the Chains of darkneſs and no Light.

Light. Here is the Biting-Worm of Conſcience. Here are ſcorching and devouring Flames. Here be all the damned Devils, and is it for ever, for ever? Is there no hope of mercy, and deliverance? Are all theſe yellings, piercing cries, groans, tears, to no purpoſe? Who but we in Hell that drink of the wrath of the Almighty, know the power of his anger. *O what a fearful and grievous thing it is, to fall into the Hands of the living God!* Heb. 10. 31. *Nah.* 1. 6. *Who can ſtand before his Indignation? who can abide the fierceneſs of his anger?* Poor periſhing ſoul, is it nothing to be ſeparated from God, and to be a Fire-brand of Hell for ever? O what a miſery is it, that you can make nothing of this, nor fear it till you ſee it and feel it!

What if thou ſhouldſt be deprived of all thy ſenſes and faculties: ſuppoſe thou ſhouldſt be ſtruck deaf, and never hear more; dumb, and never ſpeak more; blind, and never ſee more; lame, and never go more; looſe thy palat, and never taſte more? What if thou ſhouldſt be deprived of all thy comforts, how couldſt thou bear it?

If

If thou ſhouldſt never ſee the light of the Sun, Moon and Stars more, and never ſee Father, Mother, Wife, Children, and thy own Land more, or never wear Cloathes, put on thine Ornaments, or eat bread more, would it not ſadden thine heart?

If the Sun ſhould go down in *England*, and never ſhine more; if there ſhould never be a Seed-time, nor Harveſt more, what a Woe with a witneſs would this be, and pierce a heart of flint? What crying would there be to God to command the Sun to appear and ſhine again?

But O what a miſery is it to be ſhut out from God, *In whoſe Preſence is fulneſs of joy, and Pleaſures for evermore!* Sinner, wilt thou ſay, Soul, take thine eaſe, and be merry, when the Wrath and Vengeance of God hangs over thy head, ready to be poured out upon thee; yea, when there is nothing but a little breath between thee, and endleſs, eaſeleſs and remedileſs miſery.

Friend, thou canſt bear the hearing, reading and diſcourſe of Hell and Dooms-day, and be no more frighted then

then to look upon a dead Lion, or a painted-Fire, but what will the thing it self be? *Can thine heart endure, or thine hands be strong, in the day that I shall contend with thee? saith the Lord*, Ezek. 22. 14.

If the giving of the Law, with Thundrings, Lightning and Tempest, made *Moses* and all *Israel* tremble, O what will the strict execution, and inflicting the utmost penalty of the Law upon Soul and Body for ever be!

If Christ the Babe of *Bethlehem* was terrible in the Manger to *Herod* and all *Jerusalem*, what will his Bar and Throne of Justice be!

Is a perpetual banishment out of *England* as terrible to some Malefactors as death; and dost thou think it (O careless Soul) no great matter to be banish'd eternally from Christ? *Absalom* would rather die then to lose the favour and presence of his Father *David*; you can hear, the Sentence will be *Depart*, and take no notice of it; but when there shall be a general conflagration of all things, and the Earth, Heaven, Sea in a Flame. And the Lord Judge shall descend from Hea-

ven

ven with a ſhout, with the voice of the Arch-Angel and the Trumpet of God, and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe, and the living be caught up to meet the Lord in the Air, who ſhall be owned, and honoured of Chriſt in the face of the whole World, and ſhall go in with Chriſt. Then a ſeparation from Chriſt will be ſomething: To ſee all the Elect of God come from the *Eaſt*, and from the *Weſt*, and from the *North*, and from the *South*. And ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of Heaven, and your ſelves ſhut out. Can you bear ſuch a ſight?

O that you would believe it, and think of it before the day be ended, and the gate of mercy ſhut. Go home and proſtrate thy ſelf before the Lord, that he will make you ready to go in with Chriſt, and if this mighty work be done upon thine heart, O ſtand, and wonder at the infinite love of God, and do as Chriſt bid the man, out of whom he had caſt the unclean Spirit: Go home to thine houſe, and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee, *Mark* 5. 19.

SECT.

SECT. IX.

Means and Directions to make ready to go in with Christ to the Marriage.

Direct. 1. Look as for thy life, that thy beginning in Religion be right: Then are those beginnings hopeful, when the Spirit of God in the Ministry of the Word, or any other means of grace works upon us, so that we be sure to lay a good Foundation at first. An error at the Threshold of the House, or first setting out in the profession and practise of Religion is very dangerous, like a defect in the Foundation, that threatens the fall of the whole Fabrick, like a leak in the Ship that indangers the Ship and Men too; or like a flaw in a mans Deed, that threatens the loss of the whole Estate. There will be a beginning and an end alike, when Grace is radicated, and the operation of the Spirit enters deep into the soul: Whereas a child mishapen in the Womb, is ever afterwards a Monster.

2. But

Queſt. *But when is it right?*

Anſw. This right beginning may include three things, according to which compare and try your ſelves:

1. A clear conviction of ſin, with an inward converſion to God.

2. A moſt deliberate, joyful, and cordial Reception of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And that upon ſuch terms as the Goſpel propounds him unto us, *viz.* with all his Commands in his Perſon and Offices.

3. An hearty, total and unreſerved reſignation, and dedication of a mans ſelf to God: with an abhorrency of ſin, and a conſtant reſolution to love God, and to live to him for ever, *Acts* 2.37,38. *Chron.* 26.18. *Luke* 19.6. *Eſ.* 26. 13. 44. 4. *Prov.* 23. 26. 2 *Cor.* 4.8. What St. *Paul* that great Apoſtle Preach't, we muſt practice, or no preparation to go in with Chriſt. Repentance is one of the principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and called a Foundation, *Heb.* 6. Soul, Thou muſt know the Plague of thy Heart, and be ſenſible of thine own iniquity, and look upon him whom thou haſt pierced, and ſit alone, and keep ſilent,

silent, and put thy mouth in the dust, and mourn like the Doves of the Valley, or no hopes of Heaven. Moreover, this is not a work for one day only, but upon every particular tailing, you must renew your Repentance, and make the Sword of godly sorrow to go deep into thy soul: When thou hast fallen, think with thy self, I have done that now which will make me guilty of the whole Law, and enough to cast me out of Gods favour for ever: Therefore open the Sore, make confession and give Glory to God; and run to thy Advocate to make peace and procure thy pardon.

They are all pardoned Penitents, who are prepared to go in with Christ.

Direct. 2. Would you be ready to go in with Christ, cast off all Incumbrances, and make haste in your way to Heaven: Heaven is a glorious Crown, we must strip and strain, run and win it: How can a man run with a Burthen on his Shoulders, and Fetters on his Feet? The Snail is very slow in his motion, who carries his house on his back; Christian, get the bolts off

off thy hands, and fetters off thy feet. Caſt out the lading, lighten the Veſſel of thy Soul, and prevent thy Shipwrack. The burthen of worldly cares, the lime-twigs to our wings and affections, and (which ſticks to us as Pitch and Tar to the ſides of the Ship) are the bane of many a ſoul. The glittering things of the world which ſparkle in our eyes, and attract our hearts, are but like rotten wood or Glow-worms, which ſhine in the dark: *Set not thine heart upon the Aſſes*, ſaid *Samuel* to *Saul*; *Regard not your ſtuff*, ſaid *Joſeph* to his Brethren.

Chriſtians, you are going to Mount *Sion*, value not your moveables. We may carry the World, and the pleaſing objects of it, our Children and Relations in our hands, but not in our hearts. All outward comforts are but like Flowers that will wither in our hands, or like dead water which will ſoon putrifie. They are thornes and ſnares to very many:

Licitis perimus omnes:

The World kept the young man out of Heaven, who could (as he thought) eaſier

easier keep the whole Law, then part with his Riches. He was sad, 'tis said; why so? he had his Estate, but he would have had the World, and Christ too! Thousands lose Christ and Heaven to gain the Earth: How doth the love of the World creep into our hearts, where there can be but little room for God and Grace?

Christians, startle at gross and scandalous Sins, that look with a black and ugly Aspect, as Murther, Adultery, Damming, Swearing, Theft: but the World may be welcome, though the immoderate love of the World is as contrary and inconsistent with Grace as the forementioned sins. Other sins walk naked, this must have a covering, a cloak of covetousness.

Love not the world, keep your hearts above; 'tis below a Christian to love the world, who hath better objects for his love. *Adonijah* must not sit on *Solomon*'s Throne: 'Tis not for Lions and Master-beasts to prey on Mice, nor for Eagles to catch at Flies. The Sons of Princes must not live like Beggars and mean persons.

Christian, do not wring thy Hands, nor hang thy Wings, though Creature-comforts withdraw from thee: when there is no water in the Cistern, there is enough in the Fountain. *In my Fathers house is bread enough*, said the Prodigal Son. *Cæsar* was wont to say, *Cogitate Cæsarem esse*, think thou art *Cæsar*: Horses can trample upon Pearles and Mines of Gold, Birds mute upon Princes Palaces, and shall we set up this Clay-Idol of Bastards in our hearts, and not the Inheritance of Sons (as one calls the world.) Hear what God said to *Baruch*, *Seekest thou great things, seek them not*, Jer. 45. 5.

Christian, Heaven is thy home, the World is but thy Inn; though a man hath better Diet, better Attendants, better Lodging in his Inn then at Home, yet he remembers 'tis but for a night, and he must be gone, 1 *Chron.* 29. 15.

Take a view of all your profits, pleasures, treasures and comforts of this life, *viz.* husband, wife, children, pearls, rich apparel, silver, gold, great friends, large possessions, offices, honours, sumptuous buildings, pleasant walks, upon which thou

thou hast lost so much labour, time and care, and upon the Arrest and stroke of death are gone for ever.

One of the Ancients standing at *Cæsars* Tomb, he wept, and cried out, *Where is now the flourishing beauty of* Cæsar? *what is become of his Magnificence? where are the Armies, where is the honour of* Cæsar? *where are now the Victories, the Triumphs and Trophies of* Cæsar? *are they all gone and departed?* Christian, love that but a little, which thou canst not love long; Riches reach not to Eternity. *I am going,* said one, *where money is no current Coin.*

Contemne vivens quæ post habere non potes.

Direct. 3. Be diligent, constant and serious in the use of every known means and practice of every commanded duty. If you will go in to heaven hereafter, you must follow the Lord here. Christian, with greatest care and conscience practise these four duties to make ready for Christ.

1. With love and delight attend the Miniſtry of the Word, wait on it, as the poor man at the Pool for healing, *and ſo hear that thy Soul may live. Mary* attending upon the Word is commended by Chriſt. *The Goſpel* (ſaith Dr. *Sibs*) *is a Chariot to carry Chriſt up and down in the World*; reſolve to follow this Chariot, be often under the Influences of Heaven, that the Sun of Righteouſneſs may let down his warm Beams upon you. The Spirit of God in the Miniſtry of the Word hath converted many a Soul, and prepared them for Heaven.

Secondly, Let the holy Sabbath or Lords day be always welcome to thee. *How glad am I*, ſaid one, *when I ſee the firſt light of the Lords day:* Inure thy ſelf to the ſtrict Obſervation of that high and holy day of God, keep it as for thy life, that at the end of every Lords day, thou mayſt be fit to enter upon an eternal Sabbath: how ſeaſonable and ſweet is it when Gods Spirit and our Hearts meet in the Duties we perform. *I was in the Spirit*, ſaith *John*, *on the Lords day.*

Three

Three Duties in Religion are very hard, *viz.* 1. To watch the heart. 2. To pray without wandring and diſtraction; and 3. To keep the Lords Day well.

3. Be frequent and affectionate in the celebration of that moſt uſeful and glorious Ordinance the Lords Supper, by which we muſt ſhew forth the Lords death till he come. And if you would feed on, and feaſt with Chriſt in this bleſſed Banquet, of which Chriſt is both the Maſter and the Matter, do three things: Firſt, always come with due Preparation. Secondly, with high expectation. Thirdly, when come, make application.

4. Be very ſolemn and ſerious in thy Cloſet-Viſits, *viz.* be early and late with God by ſecret Prayer. The great *Roman* Captain *Scipio*, before he undertook any buſineſs, was wont firſt to enter the Capital, pretending a conſulting with the Gods; ſeveral Miniſters being at a Table where the Queſtion was asked, *What was the beſt Trade?* one anſwered, *Begging*, meaning Prayer. Wouldſt thou be prepared to go

in with Christ, follow him with unutterable groans from day to day for Grace, and fitness for Heaven, speak out thine heart before God, as *Hannah* did when she obtained a Son. The Voice is not absolutely necessary in Prayer, but the Heart: It matters not though the door of the Lips be shut, so the closet of the Heart be open. When thou art going into thy Chamber, or come into thy Closet to bow before the Lord, observe these Particulars.

1. Search and find out thine heart, and say, I am going about a great work, to beg Grace to prepare me for Heaven, Where art thou my heart?

2. Summon in thine heart; 'tis often out of the way, send a word of command after it, and fetch it in.

3. Stir and lift up thine heart; the heart is like a Bell that will make no Musick till it be raised up, like green Wood that will not burn without much blowing.

4. Fix thy Heart on God to whom thou prayest, and on Jesus Christ in whose Name thou dost it. Should a Man make a suit to the King for his life, and

not

not mind his business? the most High looks upon the heart.

5. Watch thine heart, and look for a return of thy Prayer, otherwise thine heart will give thee the slip, and thy Prayer is lost. Prayer one compares to a Chain, one end of which is fastened to the Believers tongue, the other to Gods Ear, who is called *A God hearing Prayer*. Say with *Job*, *I will fill my mouth with Arguments*. When *David* had taken good order for building the Temple, he directs his Prayer to God to prepare their hearts.

The *Lacedemonians* had a custom to ask nothing of their Gods, but things of weight and moment. Is not this of greatest concernment? Try what Prayer can do, plead before God by Ardent and Importunate Prayer to make thee ready, render thy self to God as an undone Creature to new mould, form and fashion thine Heart for himself; carry thy Heart to him on thy Knees, as *Moses* brought the two Tables of Stone after the first were broken and defaced, for God to Write

what he Will. Say Lord, I have heard what a dismal, dark, dreadful place Hell is, and what a blessed and glorious place Heaven is, and yet I am not prepared for it. This heart of mine I have had on many a sick-bed, and sentence of Death, and under many a Sermon, and sometimes it hath been startled, and awakned, then I have purposed and promised to repent, pray, leave my sins, to part with the World, and to become a new man, but I have acted the Hypocrite, all this is come to nothing; Lord do that in me and for me, which none but a God can do.

The bloody Child cannot beautifie and adorn it self. The *Ethiopian* cannot change his Skin, nor the *Leopard* his Spots. The preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord, *And I have cried day night before thee*, said *David*: 'Tis storied of a woman in *Essex*, after the Sentence was past upon her, she cried so earnestly to the Judge for Mercy, that the Judge and Justices rebuked her, to whom she replied, *I beseech you my Lord, it is for my life.* Christian, 'tis for Heaven and the

the Eternal life of thy Soul, therefore be earneſt with God for his Spirit to ſanctifie, and prepare thine heart, which by Nature, is a filthy polluted Veſſel. God can make thine heart as ſoft Wax, and ſtamp his Image on it, but he will be ſought unto. The poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, *Pſal.* 34. 6. *My Prayers* (ſaid *Jonah*) *came in unto thee*, Chap. 2. 7. At that great and dreadful day, when the Sun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the Moon into blood, whoſoever ſhall call upon the Name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved, *Acts* 2. 20.

Direct. 4. Keep this eye upon God and thine account, expect every moment the cry at Midnight, and be often thinking of Heaven and Hell, Death and Judgment: and at the end of every day, reflect upon the preceding actions and paſſages of it. Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord, *I have ſet the Lord always before me*, ſaid *David*. Soul, meditate daily on theſe three things.

1. Think of the great day of Account.

2. The great Account you are to give.

3. The Juſt and great Judge to whom the Account is to be given. Some have their Houſes ſcituate near *Golgotha*, and view the Graves of the dead every day, and do not think of Death and Eternity. *Charles* the Firſt, that War-like and glorious Emperour of *Germany*, reſigned his Empire, and liv'd two years retiredly, before his death, in the company of Religious Men, providing for Eternity. Devout ſoul, if thou wouldſt begin with God every morning, and walk with God all day, and lie down with God at night in the Evening, ask thy ſelf theſe or the like Queries.

1. Q. *How did I awake this morning, with God or the World?*

2. Q. *What hath been the conſtant Frame of my Heart in ſociety, and in my ſolitude this day?*

3. Q. *Have I bowed twice before the Mercy-Seat this day? and opened my caſe to God ſeriouſly, or have my Cloſet-viſits been ſhort and ſlight?*

4. Q.

4. Q. *What have I done in order to my great Account this day? Have my words and actions tended to Gods Glory?*

5. Q. *Have I neglected no opportunity of doing or receiving good this day? who hath bin the better for me this day?*

6. Q. *How have I behaved my self in Company, in my Calling, and in my Family this day?*

7. Q. *How hath my heart bin affected and enlarged in holy Performances, both in secret, or my house? Do I habituate my self to holy Duties? Is Religion my main business?*

8. Q. *What serious and awakening apprehensions and thoughts of God, Christ, the Spirit, my Soul, Death and Judgment have I had this day?*

9. Q. *Have not I by some sin of omission or commission made work for Repentance and Humiliation this day? and is my heart in a melting and mourning frame? can I offer to God the sacrifice of a broken heart?*

10. Q. *Have I met with Christ this day, and have gone one step forward in my way to Heaven? what Power have I*

gotten

gotten over my corruptions and passions, what Grace have I exercised?

Direct. 5. Let it be thy constant and greatest care to keep a good Conscience in all things. Stand off from iniquity; see that there be no allowed reigning sin in thine heart and life: God will know it, whose eyes are pure and in every place. Sinner, it will be bad looking God in the face with a galled, guilty Conscience, an enemy in thy bosom. *If our heart condemn us, God is greater then our hearts, and knoweth all things*, 1 Joh. 3. 19, 20.

Vox Conscientiæ est Vox Dei.

Conscience is Gods Vice-gerent in us, and it will be a friend or a fury, and cause an Hell within, or a Heaven within. 'Tis dreadful for a man to carry Hell about with him, the Evidence of his Condemnation in his own breast. Whereas the in-witness of a good Conscience will be as a Wall of Brass to a Believer, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *For our rejoycing*

is

is this, the teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the Grace of God we have had our converſation in the World, and more abundantly to you wards. Keep this Bird of Paradiſe always in thy boſom, that thine heart may not reproach and ſmite thee.

A guilty Conſcience repreſenteth Death and Judgment dreadful, and terrible to great men; even to Kings, the gods of the World. *Richard* the Third, after the murther of his own two innocent Nephews, had fearful dreams, inſomuch that he did often leap out of his bed in the dark, and run about the Chamber, even diſtracted with horrour, as if all the Furies of Hell were hanging about him. So *Charles* the Ninth of *France*, after the bloody Maſſacre of *Paris*, was ſo inwardly terrified, that he was every night laid to ſleep, and awakened with a ſet of Muſitians. Sins againſt Conſcience, are neareſt to the Devils ſin. O how aſtoniſhing is this, when a man dying muſt ſay, (if he ſpeaks the truth) I have rebell'd

hell'd againſt my Creator, I have ſerved the Devil, I have ſatisfied my Luſts, and now I go to Eternal torments.

Therefore forſake thy ſins, repent, and get thy Conſcience ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt.

Direct. 6. Begin, and for ſome ſpace continue, that ſo much neglected Duty of conſideration, and take the moſt convenient time and place for it. Do not ſay of the Work of Heaven, as the *Jews* of the Temple; *The time is not come*, that time the Lords Houſe ſhould be built. But what ſaid the Lord by the Prophet, *Is this a time to dwell in ceiled houſes, and my Houſe is not built.* Poor Soul, wilt thou ſleep and be ſecure, indulge thy Fleſh, Sin, and purſue the World, and haſt made no preparation for thy Eternal Habitation? Thus ſaith the Lord, *Conſider your ways. Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, conſider your ways*, Hag. 1. 5. 7. This Work through the bleſſing of God hath been very ſucceſsful. I have heard a very Religious Father dying, make his prodigal ungodly Son promiſe him, after

after his death to go into his Closet, and set alone for several times; which being performed, he at last considered, that his Father did it out of love to his Soul, that he might not perish Everlastingly, and so it was made the means of his Conversion. There is another Story like unto this, of a Traveller coming to an Inn, where he found a very Beautiful and Witty young Woman, but very vain and frothy; when he went from the Inn, he gave her a piece of gold upon Condition, she would ingage, and promise to retire into her Chamber, at several seasons, and upon her Knees utter such words before the Lord, *Lord, thou hast given me these Natural Parts, and comely proportion; Is it not pity that so Amiable a Creature as thou hast made me, should be damn'd, and burn in Hell for ever?* And after this she became Sober, Religious, and left the Inn. 'Tis a Character of a true penitent to sit alone. But if I resolve and promise to go alone, and consider, what must I think of: Ask thy self these questions.

Quest.

Q. 1. *What was I when first born into this wretched World? Did I bring any thing that was good with me, to entitle me to, and prepare me for Heaven? Am I not worse now? Have I Answered the glorious End of my Creation?*

Q. 2. *O my soul, have I not often dared God to damn thee? Is it not a wonder I am now in the World, that so many of my Acquaintance and Companions in sin are dead, and in Hell, and I not there?*

Q. 3. *Where had I bin if I had died when last sick, or when my Husband, Wife, Father, Mother, Brother and Sister died?*

Q. 4. *Whom do I resemble, the holy God, or the black Devil? Doth not my Practice tell me I am unfit to stand before God, and to go in with Christ to the Marriage?*

Q. 5. *What Influence hath all the Powerful and Soul-searching Sermons of Death and Judgment I have heard, and all the sicknesses and loss of Friends had upon my heart? and this I have read about Preparation for Heaven? What hatred of Sin, what love of Holiness, what*

desire

desire after Christ and Heaven is there in my heart?

Q. 6. *Have I any thing to say or object against Christ and a holy life? Is it not the way to Heaven, and to secure and save my Soul for ever? if it be not good to live the life of the Righteous, why did* Balaam *desire to die the death of the Righteous? Why should not I be and do that now, which I will wish I had been and done at Death and Doomsday? Are there no Resolutions stirred up in me to a strict and pious course?*

Q. 7. *Why are the Company and Prayers of good Ministers and Christians, more pleasing to Men dying, (who have liv'd ill) then their Companions in sin? Will the bawdy Songs, Jokes and hellish Oaths of Swearers, Drunkards and Adulterers comfort thee in a departing hour?*

Q. 8. *Shall not I have a thousand times more cause, when I go hence, to curse the day of my birth then* Job *or* Jeremy, *and wish I had never had a being?*

Q. 9. *O my Soul! who art now in a House of Clay, must not thou have another habitation in a little time? Thou art*

art fast in thy way towards the eternal World. Why was I born? what have I done? whom have I serv'd? whose of right am I? Where wilt thou be my Soul, when out of this vile body? O Death where wilt thou Land and lodge my Soul, in the Region of Darkness, or in the Land of Light? in the Rivers of Life and Joy, or in the lake and dungeon of Death? Wilt thou bring me to the Vision of God, and Bosom of Christ in the New Jerusalem, among the glorious Angels and Saints in eternal Pleasure and Felicities, or into the dark Vale and Prison with Devils and Reprobates, to be pained, plunged and tormented for ever?

Q. 10. Will the way and course I am now in, bring me to Heaven, or will it not? Sit down and consider, O my soul, thy time is short, Death is certain, Eternity is near, thy Work is great, thy Account will be strict, Heaven is glorious, Hell is intolerable, eternal; I must be regenerated and prepared in a few days, or all is lost?

Direct. 7. Resolve, love and delight to

to be that towards God, who seeth in secret, which thou wouldst have men think thou art, or speak and write of thee living and dead. Commune with thine heart, and enquire, Am I a *Jew* inwardly, or more religious and serious in shew then in sincerity. The most upright cannot be deceiv'd. To apply this home to thine heart, let me ask thee these Questions.

1. *What doth thy Conscience say when thou art alone?*

2. *What doth thy Closet say, or those Duties which none observeth but God?*

3. *What do thy Fellow Christians say, who are most judicious, spiritual, and best able to discern?*

4. *What doth thy Conversation say?*

5. *What do thy Family, viz. Wife, Children, Servants say?*

6. *What doth the sacred Records of the Word say?*

Speak Conscience, speak Closet, speak Christians and Neighbours, speak Life, speak Wife, Husband, Children, Servants; speak Law and Testimony, Is this Man or Woman sincere, and fit to

to go into Heaven with Christ? why wouldst thou be thought that thou art not? When thou art in the house of the Grave, wouldst thou have this written on thy Tomb or Sepulcher?

Here lieth an Atheist, who said in his heart there was no God nor Devil, Heaven nor Hell, till he came into Hell among the Devils.

Here lieth a seeming Saint, one that profes's'd and owned Religion, but was rotten and false-hearted, who deceived himself and the world, and lost Heaven by his Hypocrisie.

Here lieth an Earth-worm, a man that laboured all his life for the world, that would be rich, and raise his Family though with the ruine of his soul, and made no preparation for Eternity. He lived and laboured as if Bodies had bin immortal, and souls mortal.

Here lieth an Heretick and Blasphemer, whose Opinions caused him to perish.

Here lieth a man that mock'd at Holiness, and hated the Preachers, Professors and Practisers of Religion, whose blood he would have shed with all his heart.

Here

Here lieth a Drunkard, a Swearer, a Murderer, a Thief, a false perjured Person, a Liar, a Back-biter, who hurt others, and has undone themselves.

Here lieth a man that had fair opportunities for Heaven, but would not improve them; he made no Conscience of hearing Sermons, reading and sanctifying the Lords Day.

Here lieth one that had holy Parents, and was piously educated, but he would not hearken to their Reproofs and Counsels, and tread in their Religious steps, who walk'd in the way to heaven.

Here lieth a man that lived without God in the World, that neither prayed in his Closet nor Family.

Here lieth an Apostate, who lost his Soul and Heaven by departing from the Truth: and his Carnal compliance.

Here lieth a Pharisee, a man hot, zealous, and furious for the form, bark, and suburbs of Religion, and there rested, but never had the Power of it.

Friend, wouldst thou be reputed and counted

counted a good Christian among men, so be thou be such a one before God: or woe be unto thee when Christ shall come. *The upright shall dwell in his presence*, Psal. 140. 13.

Direct. 8. Would you go in with Christ, begin the Work of Heaven while in the World, and drive a great Trade for Heaven. Christian, send and search out the holy Land, get a Prospect or Pisgah-sight of Heaven, and having tasted this pleasant fruit, press on, possess it. Keep Grace in its most lively and vigorous exercise, let it not decline for a world.

True Grace is persevering, a spark that will never cease, aspiring till it be joyned with the Flame of Eternal Glory.

The best sight in *England*, (saith a Reverend Divine) is to see an old Professor to grow better and better. Christian, let the stream of thy heart be Heaven-ward: Ascend the mount of Divine Communion every day, and when you are in your private Devotions, get your heart into Heaven. Delight in that which must be

be your Heaven, viz. in the face, and favour of God, *Mat.* 5. 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*, Joh. 17. 24. *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World.*

Be much in praising and blessing God. Prayer and Thanks are (saith one) like the double motion of the Lungs, the Air suck't in by prayer is breathed out in thanks. Mercies that come down by prayer, should be returned and ascend in praises.

Moreover, keep a constant, and sensible Communion with Christ: Let thine heart go forth to meet him every day, and in every duty, *Psal.* 63. 8. When Christ and the soul meet in his Ordinances, the Believer may say, This is the Gate of Glory; Communion must prepare us for Fruition. *Augustus Cæsar* died in the kisses of his wife *Livia*: The prepared soul many times dies in the Kisses of his dear Lord.

Direct.

Direct. 9. Carefully discharge your Relative-Duties, and abound in Acts of Mercy and Charity to all. Follow the holy Examples of former Saints, *viz. Abraham*, Gen. 18. 19. *For I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Houshold after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment, that the Lord may bring upon him that which he hath spoken of him.* Josh. 14. 15. *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your Fathers served that were on the other side of the Flood, or the gods of the* Amorites, *in whose Land ye dwell, but as for me and my House, we will serve the LORD.* *David*, Psal. 101. 2, 3, 6, 7. *I will behave my self wisely in a perfect way, O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me. Mine eyes shall be upon the Faithful of the Land, that*

that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

Do your utmost to breed and train up your Children and Servants for Christ and Heaven, and not for the Devil and Hell.

Shall God make Inquisition for the blood of the Body when murdered, and will he not for the blood of a Soul?

Suppose when the beloved Child is in the Cradle, or at the Mothers breast, the Devil should come, and say to the Parent, take this Child and train it up for me, teach it to be proud, to lie, swear, steal, prophane Gods day, to mock at holiness, let it have its will, and never restrain or correct it; do not put it in mind of God, or Catechise it while you live. Send this Child early to my Schools, to Ale-houses, Taverns, Comedies, teach it to Card and Dice, and all fleshly delights, sports and recreations; this would seem dreadful to you: and you would say, *Get thee behind me Satan.*

O then let every Father take the same care as *David* did of his Son *Solomon*, and as *Solomon* did of his son *Rehoboam*. See the pious and Parental Charge of *David*, 1 *Chr.*

21, 9. And *Solomon*, as it's thought, wrote the first eight Chapters of the *Proverbs* for the sake of *Rehoboam*. Let all Parents say, as *Psal.* 34. 11. *Come, ye Children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*

But who can say of his Children, as one said of *Austin* to this Mother *Monica*, That it was impossible a Child of so many Prayers should perish. Are your Children the Children of Prayers and Tears?

Job was careful of his Children, who sent and sanctified them after their feasting. The study and care of most Parents is to enrich their Children, to leave them ample Portions and Estates, to make them great and honourable, and to provide Husbands and Wives for them; but to sanctifie and save their Souls is not their care.

Happy is that man, when leaving the world, can say to his children, as old *Jacob*, *I die, but the Lord will be with you.* When God by death removes your near and dear Relations, you are troubled that you were no more serviceable to their Souls.

Again, to your relative Piety add your Alms, draw out your souls to the hungry. The poor shall never cease out of the Land. *The poor you have always with you*, saith Christ.

Christ. Be open-hearted and liberal-handed to necessitous persons, but especially to Gods poor. This duty is costly, but it will be comfortable. The Apostle calleth it, *a good foundation against the time to come.* And Christ will publickly acknowledge, and take all that is done in his Name, to his Ministers and Members as done to himself, *Mat.* 25. 45. 1 *Tim.* 6. 18, 19.

Direct. 10. Lastly, Would you go into Heaven with Christ, labour to live like him here, who hath left us an example that we should follow his steps. Christians, in all things imitable we must imitate Christ. His natural actions, his occasional actions, his miraculous and mediatory actions we are not to imitate, but his moral and religious actions we must imitate. 'Tis recorded of the *French* men, that they are wonderfully pleased with whatsoever is said or done by their Kings, whom they love to resemble. Their Song is

Mihi placet quicquid Regi placet,

Whatsoever pleaseth the King, pleaseth me. The Disciples and Subjects of Christ, the King of Saints, must follow him, as *Jonathans* Armour-bearer did his Master, as the

Jews did the Cloudy-Pillar, as the *Israelites* did their Captain *Joshua*, who led them into *Canaan*, as the wise men did the Star which brought them to Christ. The Life of Christ is a Copy without a blot or any uneven letter in it; *And every one that saith he abideth in him, must so walk even as Christ walked*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 9. The Life of Christ is a Christians Bible to read in, his Glass to dress himself by, his Compass to sail by, his Touchstone to try himself by; And he that professeth Faith in Christ must follow Christ. God hath appointed us to be conformable to the Image of his Son, *Rom.* 8. In these twenty Particulars I have drawn forth the Life of Christ. Look every day upon this unparallel'd Picture for your imitation.

First, You must imitate your dear and blessed Redeemer in his meekness and patience, *Isa.* 53. 7. *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth*, Jam. 1. 4. *But let Patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

2. Imitate Christ in his Humility and infinite Condescension, who though he was the highest

highest became the lowest, *Mat.* 11.29. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls*, Phil. 2.3,4,5,6,7. *Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better then themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others; Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*, Joh. 13.14,15. *If then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one anothers feet: for I have given you an example, that ye shall do as I have done to you. Pride*, saith a Reverend Divine, *is the part of the Devils Image in man.* And so filthy a Weed, (saith another) that nothing will thrive near it.

3. Imitate Christ in his universal compliance with his Fathers Will, both in his Active and Passive Obedience, *Joh.* 5.30. *I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me*, Chap. 6.38. *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of*

him that sent me. Luk.22.42. *Saying, Father if thou be willing, remove this Cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.*

4. Resemble Christ in his kindness unto and prayers for his Enemies, *Luk.*22.50,51. *And one of them smote the servant of the High Priest, and cut off his right Ear. And Jesus answered, and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his Ear, and healed him.* Luk.23.34. *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

5. Imitate Christ in his conformity to and diligent Attendance upon Gods holy Ordinances, and Institutions, *Luk.*4.16. *And he came to* Nazareth, *where he had been brought up, and as his custom was, he went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.* Luk.12.16. *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the Disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?*

6. Imitate Christ in his tenderness of sin, whose Innocency was attested by his Enemies, and he acquitted by his Judge, *Joh.*8.40. *Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?* Chap. 14.30. *Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the Prince of this World cometh, and hath*

hath nothing in me. Chap. 19. 4. *Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.*

7. Imitate the Lord from heaven in his contempt of the World, and the Honours of it, *Mat.* 12. 15, 16. *But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all: And charged them that they should not make it known.*

8. Imitate your dearest, and sweetest Lord in heavenly-mindedness, whose heart was in Heaven while he was upon the Earth, *Joh.* 16. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World: again, I leave the World, and go to the Father.* Chap. 17. 5. *And now, O Father, glorifie thou me with thine own self, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was.*

9. Imitate your Lord and Master, in his wonderful self-denial, *Mat* 16. 24. *Then said Jesus unto his Disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.*

10. Imitate your blessed Redeemer in his burning Zeal for Gods glory, *Joh.* 2. 17. *And his Disciples remembred that it was written,*

The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

11. Imitate your holy Lord in his subjection to, and care of his Parents, *Luk.* 2.51. *And he went down with them, and came to* Nazareth, *and was subject unto them:* Joh. 19.26, 27. *When Jesus therefore saw his Mother, and the Disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his Mother, Woman behold thy Son. Then saith he to the Disciple, behold thy Mother. And from that hour that Disciple took her unto his own home.* Eph. 6.1,2,3. *Children obey your Parent in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first Commandment with promise.) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the Earth.*

12, Imitate your compassionate Saviour in his sympathizing with his disconsolate and afflicted friends, and do what you can to relieve, and comfort them, *Joh.* 11.33. *When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the* Jews *also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled.* Col. 3. 12. *Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, Holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.*

13. Imitate Christ in his carefulness to maintain the Truth, witness his most strict

Expo-

Exposition of the Law, *Mat.* 5. his Disputing with the Doctors, and his confuting of the *Sadducees*, Luk. 2. 46. *And it came to pass, that after three days, they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the Doctors, both hearing them, and asking them Questions.* Mat. 22. 34. *But when the Pharisees had heard, that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.* Contend earnestly for the Faith.

15. Imitate your Lord Jesus in his Wisdom and Prudence, to avoid the catching, entrapping, ensnaring Questions of his subtil, malicious enemies, *Luk.* 20. 26. *And they could not take hold of his words before the people, and they marvelled at his Answers, and held their peace:* Joh. 8. 34, 5, 6. *And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a Woman taken in Adultery, and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this Woman was taken in Adultery, in the very act. Now* Moses *in the Law commanded us, that such in the Law should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his Finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.* Psal. 39. 1. *I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bri-*

die, while the wicked is before me, Prov. 19.3. *He that keepeth his lips keepeth his life.*

15. Imitate Christ in his Truth and Faithfulness to God and Man; And see that you who seem religious be just and righteous, speak every Man the truth to his Neighbour. 1 *Pet.* 2.22. *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:* Eph. 4.25. *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his Neighbour, for we are members one of another.*

16. Imitate your Lord in secret Duties, particularly in Closet-prayer, *Mark* 1.35. *And in the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.* He continued all night in prayer to God. *Luke* 6.12. *Mat.* 6.6. *But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

17. Imitate your Lord and Master in his religious care of his Family, his Disciples in praying with them, and for them, and teaching them to pray, instructing of them, and expounding the Parables to them, *Luke* 11.1. *And it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his*

Disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John *also taught his Disciples*: Mark 14. 38. *Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation: The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.* Mark 4. 34. *And when they were alone, he expounded all things unto his Disciples.*

18. Imitate Christ in his Thankfulness to his Father for mercies of all kinds, *Mat.* 15. 35, 36. *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven Loaves and Fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his Disciples, and the Disciples to the multitude*: 1 Thess. 5. 18. *In every thing give thanks: for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

19. Imitate your dear Lord in redeeming the golden opportunity of time, *Joh.* 9. 4. *I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.* Eph. 5. 16. *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

20. Lastly, Imitate Christ in his publique spiritedness in his whole course, who went about doing good to all with whom he had to do, *Mat.* 4. 23. *And Jesus went about all* Galilee, *teaching in their Synagogues, and Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of*

diseases

diseases among the people. Acts 10. 38. *How God anointed Jesus of* Nazereth *with the Holy Ghost, and with Power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil: for God was with him.*

O what rare and singular Saints should we be, if we did every day write after this Copy! Christians, is Christ your Head, and you his mystical Body, how monstruous and incongruous is it to see a deformed, Leprous body, joyned to a most beautiful comely Head. You hope to go in with Christ, therefore purifie your selves even as he is pure. The Sons of *Constantine* the great wholely put on their Father, whom they did exactly resemble, (saith *Eusebius.*) Will you bewail your unlikeness to Christ, and now look often upon his Picture? 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

A certain Duke of *Bavaria*, each morning used to call his servant to bring him water in a Bason, in the bottom whereof was stamped in gold the Picture of *Cato Major*, that so he might cause the Impression of his Image to be fixed in his mind, the imitation of whose vertues he had prudently proposed for his practise. Do you often look to the Image of Christ, represented in the Glass of the

the Scriptures, and let his Vertues, Graces, and exact Converſation be propoſed by you for your imitation. Oh how apt are we to miſs the mark, to go down the ſtream, and over the hedge daily. It's no leſs a miracle to be kept from the ſins of the world whilſt we live in it, then for thoſe three Worthies not to be burned when in the fiery Furnace. We among the Tents of the Uncircumciſed are as in an infected Peſt-houſe, we cannot live nor breath, but muſt ſuck in this Peſtilential Air. *Egypt* was not fuller of *Frogs* and *Lice* in every Chamber, in every hole, then the world is of ſins, ſnares, and temptations; for prevention whereof, furniſh your ſelves with divine Precepts, and ſet before you the beſt Paterns of Piety: Methinks I hear the Lord Jeſus from heaven, ſay to every Chriſtian and Profeſſor in the World, as *Gideon* to his Souldiers, *Look on me, and do likewiſe*, Jud. 7.17. Go in Chriſts ſteps, and you ſhall certainly partake of his grace, and glory, *John* 13.15.

SECT. X.

The fifth Uſe is of comfort to thoſe who are prepared to go in with Chriſt.

Chriſtian, why weepeſt thou? Why is thine heart grieved? Why is thy countenance

ſad? Thou art to go in with Chriſt, *where is fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures for evermore.* Say, *Why art thou caſt down, Oh my ſoul? Go thy way, eat thy bread, and drink thy wine with a merry heart,* Col. 9. 7. Pſal. 42. 5. Here are four great grounds of comfort: If we conſider,

1. What you ſhall go in from, and leave behind.

2. Who you ſhall go in with.

3. What you ſhall go into.

4. The duration and perpetuity of it.

Firſt, In general, you ſhall go in from, and leave behind every thing that is afflictive, and grievous to you. When *Elijah* went to heaven, he left his Mantle behind him. So when Chriſtians go in with Chriſt they ſhall be perfectly, and perpetually exempted from all ſinful, and penal evils both of ſoul and body.

Secondly, In particular, 1. You ſhall be freed from all the defects, deformities, and ſuperfluities of the body. There will be no dim or ſore eyes, no feeble knees, trembling hands, bald-heads, crooked-backs, broken bones; no Wens, Warts, Wounds, Cancers, Fiſtulaes, Scars, or any bodily blemiſh.

2. You ſhall be perfectly, and for ever free from all your bodily toil, pain, labour, with

with which the lives of many of Gods people have been made bitter. Some to get a little bread have bin labouring in the very Fire, others grinding at the Mill, some digging in the Mines, others casting up of Ditches, some spinning at the Tourn, others weaving at the Loom, and threshing in the Barn, and carrying heavy Burdens, and many of them have been servants to cruel hard Masters, like *Israel* under their Task-masters: This will be the Jubilee and Year of the Lords Release.

3. You shall be freed from all your anxious, vexing and tormenting cares and perplexities about your carnal & bad relations, as husbands, wives, parents, children, friends, estates, law-suits, debts, ill neighbours, &c.

4. You shall be freed from all your sighs, complaints, groans, rising from within or from without. *Abraham* shall no more complain for the want of an Heir, nor *Rachel* of her Barrenness, nor *Rebeckah* of the Daughters of *Heth*, nor *Jacob* of his lost *Joseph*; *David* shall not complain of his treacherous familiar Friend, nor of his rebellious son *Absalom*, or of being in the Tents of *Kedar*, the Song of the Drunkard. There shall be no grieving thorn, or pricking briar, or a *Canaanite* in the House of the Lord, neither shall

they

they be sensible of hunger, or cold, or nakedness, any more for ever.

5. You shall be freed from all your weaknesses, sickness, and all diseases whatsoever. There shall be no more Ague, Fever, Gout, Stone, Strangury, Spleen, Scurvy, Consumption, Dropsies and Lethargies, &c. The cause of all this will be removed. There will be neither an aking-head nor sinful heart.

6. You shall be freed from all your pain and travel, through cold, dirt, winds, storms, and other difficulties, to come at the Word and Ordinances of God, and from all your deadness and weariness in duties, which is the grief and sorrow of your souls.

7. You shall be perfectly freed from all your fears, corruptions, temptations, desertions and doubts, about your souls and heaven. The Spouse will never say, Her Beloved is withdrawn and gone from her. *Job* shall never feel the poisoned Arrows within him more. *David* will never say, *Save me, Oh Lord, for the Waters are come in upon my soul*; *Mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God*. The Believer shall never be heard to say or wish, O that I knew the work of grace in me were true and saving, that Gods heart were towards me, and that my heart were

were truly ſet on God. Then all their deſires ſhall be ſatisfied, all their fears removed, all their doubts reſolved, all their Prayers fully anſwered, and all their Graces perfected: and each Saint ſhall come to the fulneſs of the Stature of the Gift of Chriſt. When *Moſes* was in the Mount, he came ſhining down. Surely, the prepared Chriſtian ſhall go ſhining in, when clad with the Robe of Chriſts glorious Righteouſneſs. The bodies and ſouls of Believers ſhall be as *Adam*, when the Crown of Original Righteouſneſs was ſet upon his head; The body will be in its perfect ſtrength, and (as ſome think) as it was between thirty and forty years; and the Colours ſo rare, freſh, bright and tranſparent, that all the veins and nerves will be diſcerned, and ſo full of ſtrength and agility, as it ſhall be able (ſaith *Luther*) to Toſs the greateſt Mountain as a ball. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of the glory of the bodies of the Saints at the Reſurrection, ſaith, *It is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption; it is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory; it's ſown in weakneſs, it's raiſed in Power*, 1 Cor. 15, 42, 43. The ſame Apoſtle affirmeth, *That their vile bodies ſhall be made like unto Chriſts glorious body*. Then ſhall each Saint ſhine brighter

then

then the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father for ever and ever.

2. It is very comfortable to reflect upon the persons that shall be Copartners with you of this glory, who shall go in with Christ to the Marriage. We read *Psal.* 45. of the Queen in Gold of *Ophir*, the Kings Daughters, and honourable Women, the Virgins thy Companions, which with gladness and rejoycing shall be brought, they shall enter the Kings Palace. That numberless number of sealed ones, *Rev.* 7. 9. and great Assembly, and First-born, which are written in Heaven, many of which you have known, shall go in with you. Those that have gone to the House of God with you, fasted, mourned, prayed with you, those that have suffered with you, and who have heard the Word, and received the Lords Supper with you, and all that have died in the Lord, and gone to Heaven before you.

All the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Ministers, (*viz.*) your godly Pastors, godly Parents, godly Husbands, godly Wives, godly Children, godly Servants, godly Neighbours, whom ye have not seen many years, shall go in with you.

Is

Is not this comfortable? Christian, thou shalt see *Adam* the first man, that God made, and *Abel* the first Martyr, *Enoch* that walked with God, and was translated: Thou shalt see *Noah* that was in the Ark, and saved from the Flood, and *Lot* who lived in *Sodom*, whose righteous soul was vexed with their uncleanness. Thou shall have the sight of *Abraham*, who offered up his Son, and *Joseph* who was sold into *Egypt*: Thou shalt see *Jacob* who wrestled with the Angel, and got the blessing. Thou shalt see *Moses* the great Prophet that was in the Mount, and brought down the Law to the people, and *Aaron* the High Priest, and *Joshua* who went with the people into *Canaan*, and *Samuel* who ministred to the Lord when he was but a child, thou shalt see *Sampson* who pulled down the house upon the *Philistins*, and *David*, the man after Gods own heart, who slew *Goliah*, and *Solomon* that built the Temple, and the rest of the godly Kings of *Judah*. Thou shalt also see the three Children that were cast into the fiery Furnace, and *Daniel* that was cast into the Den of Lions. Thou shalt see *John the Baptist* that was the fore-runner of Christ, and *Paul* that was beheaded for Christ, and *Peter* that was crucified

crucified for Christ, and the good Women that ministred to him, and stood by him in his sufferings, and *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, who begged his sacred Body, and put it in his Sepulchre. Thou shalt see the blessed Virgin in whose Womb he was conceived; Thou shalt see *Cranmer*, *Ridley*, *Latimer*, and many faithful Ministers and Christians, who were burned and died for the Truth in the *Marian* days. Here is a blessed time indeed, to go in with all those, and who can tell how many more, who shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the Air, 1 *Thess.* 4.

---

3. What they shall go into is unspeakable joy to reflect upon.

First, To the publick Consummation of the Marriage, that is to be between the Kings Son and the Kings Daughter, Christ and the Church, *Rev.* 19. What a comfort will this be to the Daughters of *Zion* to behold King *Solomon*, *i.e.* Christ, in the day of his Espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart. Here we see but at a distance, and through a Glass darkly, then face to face; we shall see him as he is, and behold his glory, 1 *Cor.* 13. 9, 10, 11, 12. 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. *Joh.* 17. 24. The Queen of *Sheba* took a great Journey to behold the glory

glory of *Solomon*, which did transport her with wonder, what will the sight of Christs Person and Glory do?

Secondly, They shall be openly owned and acknowledged by Christ, when he is exalted above all. For a King to manifest signal respect to some of his Subjects and Favorites on his Marriage or Coronation-day, is an high honour.

Thirdly, They shall be enthroned and crowned with Christ, yea, sit down with him in his Throne, *Rev.*3.21. and if there were such shouts, joy, singing and triumphs, when *Solomon* was on the Throne, that the very Earth did rent with the sound of them, 1 *King.*1.39,40. O what will there be when the Saints shall be on the Throne-Royal, to judge the world! And if there is joy among the Angels at the Conversion of one sinner, What Acclamations and Triumphs will be among the Angels, at the Coronation of so many Saints! There was great joy when *Joseph* and his Brethren met in *Pharaohs* Court, what Joy will there be when Jesus and Believers shall meet above the Clouds, and in their Fathers House!

Fourthly, They shall go into the very Presence of God, and have the full Vision of him,

him, to see his eternal Records, Counsels and Decrees that have bin concealed so long. Then it will appear what they shall be. Believers, Christs Spouse will never fully understand her dignity and greatness till she come to God.

Candala Queen of *Panenia* sometime said to the *Venetians*, for her Royal Entertainment, *That she never knew her self to be a Queen, till she came to their Territories.* The same may Saints say when they come to the upper Regions and Mansions of Glory.

Lastly, 'Tis strong consolation to consider the duration of the Joys and Happiness of the Saints in Heaven, which will be without any Intermission, Succession, or Conclusion. To go into the new *Jerusalem*, that needeth no light of the Sun, Moon nor Stars, and to be with God, Christ, Angels and Saints for ever, will be incomparable Joy; St. *Paul* affirmeth, *That Believers shall be ever with the Lord*, 1 Thess. 4. 17, 18. 'Tis said of that holy man Mr. *Ward*, That being in the midst of a Dinner, and the people wondering what he was musing about, he presently brake out, *For ever, for ever, for ever*, for almost a quarter of an hour he could not be still'd, but cried out, *For ever, for ever, for ever.* To

To Conclude, Christian speedily get an assurance of Faith, that thou mayst come to a Victorious Conclusion against the strength of doubts, whereby thy pure mind may be ascertained, perswaded, and upon good ground setled in the belief of going in with Christ.

I shall shut up all in a few Queries.

1. Q. *Sinner, canst thou believe that those only who are prepared, shall be for ever with Christ, and not one more?*

2. Q. *Hast thou done as God commanded* Hezekiah *at his Summons for Death? Set thy House in Order, disposed of thine Estate, and laid no foundation for thy Wife, Children, Friends, Relations, to quarrel when thou art dead, and laid in thy Grave?*

3. Q. *Shalt thou leave a good savour behind thee when ever thou goest hence? and is there any just cause of any* Shimei *to Curse, or Dog to Bark at thee?*

4. Q. *Darest thou own all that thou hast gotten before the great and dreadful Judge, and say as* Samuel, 1 *Sam.* 12. 3, 5. *Whose Ox have I taken? whose Ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded, and he said, the Lord is witness that you have not found ought in my Hand:*

It

Is there no Man, Orphan, or Widow wronged, or Debts contracted, and not paid?

5. Q. *Hast thou carried thy self like a Christian in thy Calling, Office and Relation, and entail'd a blessing upon thy Estate and Family? Where is the Man or Womans Child or Servant, that can rise up and call thee blessed, or cordially bless God for thy Example, Company, Counsel?*

6. Q. *What hast thou done for the Church of Christ, his Honour, Interest, Ministers and afflicted Members? Have they bin the better for thee or thine Estate? great Receits will have a great Account.*

Lastly, If the cry at Midnight should now sound in thine ears, art thou ready for the Marriage? Mr. Bolton *dying, told his Children,* That none of them should dare to meet him at Gods Tribunal in an untregenerate estate: The Reason is in the Text, O, let it never, never be forgotten, that those that were ready went in with him to the Marriage, and the door was shut.

FINIS.

Trachea

1 -	6	Diseases
2 -	11	Life
3 -	18	Reproduction
4 -	35	Resort
5 -	52	Rochester
6 -	73	Contract
7	76	Economy
8	94	Resistance
9	159	Drinkers
10 -	199	Combat

THE

DOOR

OF

Heaven

Opened and Shut.

OPENED to the Ready and Prepared.

SHUT against the Unready and Unprepared.

OR,

A DISCOURSE

Concerning

The Absolute Necessity of a Timely Preparation for a Happy Eternity.

By JOHN FOX Minister of the Gospel, and Author of the Discourse concerning Time, and the End of Time.

LONDON,

Printed for Sam. Sprint at the Bell in Little Britain. 1698.

Molly Stephens

1765

MAT. 25. 10.

And they that were Ready went in with Him to the Marriage, and the Door was shut.

THE Thing of greatest moment are by most men little believed, less considered, till it be too late; That besides this present World, (which must have its period) there is another World of an eternal duration: And that according to our choice, life, and doing here, will our doom and eternal habitation be in the World to come; so that there is an indispensible Necessity to make ready for a blessed Life of Immortality. This grand Concern, the Parable of the ten Virgins warns and alarums us unto. In which Parable are two parts.

First, the Churches Preparation to meet Christ, called here *The Bridegroom*, from the first to the fifth verse.

Secondly, *the Bridegrooms coming forth to meet them*, from the fifth to the twelfth

verse. The Text falls under the second part, *viz. The Bridegroomes coming to fetch home his Bride*: O welcom day! The words serve as a Glass or bright Sun-beam, to represent the different estate of believers and unbelievers, wise and foolish Virgins, at Christs comeing by Death or Judgement.

In which observe three things.

1. The preparation of the wise Virgins, *They were ready*.

2. Their Welcom and Admission to the Marriage, *They went in with him*, i.e. *into the Presence-Chamber of the King of Glory*.

3. We have the doleful Rejection and Exclusion of the foolish Virgins, *And the Door was shut*.

The Doctrine that I shall Collect and Handle from the words is this, *They and only such who are graciously qualified and prepared for Christ in this World, shall enjoy eternal Fellowship and Communion with Christ in the other World*.

The greatest part of our happiness that we shall have in Heaven lies in this, *That we shall be with Christ*. Dost thou desire a better Countrey?

Countrey? *viz. to come safe to Heaven*: Keep thine eye ever upon thine end, and know that here life is gotten or lost to Eternity. Sinner, do not deceive thy self, to hope for Heaven, and do the work of Hell: if thou dost expect to go in with Christ, and enjoy God and glory hereafter, daily use the means, and go in the way to Heaven here. There is a congruity between the way and the end: They answer one another, as face answereth face in the water; or as the Wax and the Seal, the Voice and the Eccho do answer each other. If thy heart and life cry Heaven, Heaven, then thy End or Death will cry Heaven: but if thy Life and Practice cry hell, hell, thine End like the Eccho to the Voice will cry hell, hell. As men brew they drink, and receive wages according to their work; and as you sowe you reap: the Harvest is the end of the World, they that were ready went in, not one more. Heaven consisteth partly in the fitness and preparation of the soul and body for that blessed Society above. The Paradise of God would be a Prison, may I not say a hell, to the impious and unholy.

Sore eyes cannot behold the Sun without grief, Swine will not stay in the most plea-

saint Medows: hence, no work so irksom as Christs, no time so uncomfortable and tedious to wicked men, as abiding under Christs wings in his Ordinances.

Before I proceed to speak to the several branches in the Doctrine, I must enter a Caveat or Caution.

First, this Meetness, Fitness, and Preparation for Heaven, is not to be understood in a way of Popish Purgation or Merits, *viz.* by *Prayers, Acts of Munificence, Almes, Pilgrimages, Penance, Purgatory, &c.* The Reward is of Grace, not of Debt, or Desert, for *all our Righteousnesses are but as filthy rags; and when we have done all we are but unprofitable Servants* (saith our Saviour,) *Isa.* 64.6. *Luke* 17 10. Our good hope and everlasting consolation is through grace.

Secondly, the readiness is not to be understood, as if all that shall go to Heaven with Christ, have an inherent, sinless, and personal Perfection; As Stars have their twinklings, and Diamonds their flaws, and the best Gold doth need some grain of allowance, so the most eminent Christians have their frailties and mixtures of corruption. *Solomon* challengeth the whole world, when he saith, *Who can say I have made my heart clear, I am pure from*

from my sin? 'Tis true, there is a generation pure in their own eyes, yet are not washed from their filthiness, Prov. 30. 11. Such were the Pharisees, and some Perfectionists of this our age; whereas the Life of the most holy Man in the World, is not as a Garden without weeds, this is reserved for Heaven. And if none die comfortably, or go in with Christ, but those who have lived perfectly, then every man must go out of the World with despair and terrour, for the failings of Gods People are more then their duties, their corruptions more then their graces: so that whoever goes to Heaven, must be beholding to the redeeming blood, and justifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus. This being premised, I shall proceed to the Explanation of the Doctrine, in which I shall observe this Order and Method.

First shew, *That there is a Fitness and Preparedness in Beleevers for their future state of blessedness.*

Secondly, *That this Fitness is in the day and time of Life, not after Death.*

Thirdly, *What this Fitness for Christ and Heaven is.*

Fourthly, *I shall give the Reasons upon which all must prepare, and why none else must go in with Christ.*

Fifthly, *Improve all in several Uses.*

SECT. I.

First, *That Believers are divinely qualified for their state of Blessedness; being a People made ready and prepared for the Lord,* Luke 1.17. That those wise Virgins are fit and accounted worthy to go in with Christ, will appear three ways.

First, by their intrinsecal Endowments and Qualifications, or what God hath done in them.

Secondly, by the choice Epithites and Titles given to them.

Thirdly, their Privileges and Regalities with which they are invested and ennobled.

First, their inward Frame and Constitution doth exceed the whole World. There is most rare, curious and inimitable work of the Divine Spirit upon the souls of all that shall go in with Christ. *Believers are his Workmanship; They are renewed in the Spirit of their mind, and have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. They are holy Brethren, Partakers of the heavenly Calling, and a divine Nature, and transformed and changed from glory to glory into the*

same

same Image. They are said *to be called to Glory and Vertue*, and the life they live is called *the Life of God*, and their conversation is said *to be in Heaven*, Eph. 2. 10. Eph. 4 23, 24. Heb 3. 1. 2Pet. 1. 4. 2Cor. 3. 17.

Secondly, their Titles do speak their Fitness; They are called, *the Children of the Bride-chamber, Children of the Kingdom, Children of the Resurrection, Christs fair One, the Kings Daughter, Gods Jewels, his peculiar Treasure, his excellent Ones, such of whom the World is not worthy.*

What is the chaff to the Wheat, or pebbles to Pearls, or clods of Earth to the bright Stars, or the children of hell to these earthly Angels. The Name of a Christian is a most honourable Name. *Alexander* thought himself happy that he might be named *Achilles*, and *Cæsar* if he might be called *Alexander*. The Believers Name is of greater Renown. *Solon* was called *the Wonder of Greece, and the Glory of the* Greeks, but he was not to compare with the meanest Saint. *Constantine* and *Valentinian*, two famous Emperours, called themselves *Vassallos Christi*, the Vassals of Christ; and *Theodosius* another Emperour professed, *It was more honour to him, to be* Membrum Ecclesiæ quàm Caput Imperii,

a Member of the Church, then Head of the Empire.

Thirdly, their Priviledges also do evidence this Fitness, which are all Royal.

First, they have a Royal Descent, and so the Sons and Daughters of the Lord God Almighty, *My First-born*, saith the Lord of *Israel* of his people. We read of the children of base men, viler then the Earth, *Job* 30. 8. *Jezabel* is called a cursed woman, though a Kings Daughter. *Nebuchadnezzar* is called an abominable branch and *Antiochus Epiphanes*, a vile person. Believers are of God, and born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of men, but from above, *John* 1.

Secondly, Moreover they have a Royal Spirit. *Nebuchadnezzar* told *Daniel*, *In him was the Spirit of the holy Gods*. *Joshua* and *Caleb* (that entred into the holy Land) were men of another spirit, *Numb.* 14. 24. This Spirit that fits them for Heaven is a holy Spirit, *Rom.* 1. 4. *A Spirit of Grace*, *a Spirit of Glory*, 1 Pet. 4 14. So called, because it comes from the God of Glory, and prepares them for Glory.

Thirdly, they have Royal Offices, and are employed about Royal business. They are

Kings

Kings and Priests, whose Employment is Prayer and divine praise, *Rev.* 1.6. *Psal.* 6. 24. 1 *Pet.* 2 5,9.

Fourthly, they have Royal Attendants, the glorious Angels; these Watchers, who are great in strength, stand as Sentinels at their doors to protect their Persons, day and night while they live: And they must convey their souls thorough the Devils Territories safe to the Place of their everlasting habitation, after they are dead, *Psal.* 34. 8. *Heb.* 1. 14 *Luke* 16. 22. If you are by Grace prepared for Glory, God is your God, and this is your Guard.

Fifthly, they have a Royal Law, which is the Rule and Standard of their Obedience to God. *Jam.* 2. 8. The Writing was the Writing of God, who was both the Dictator and the Scribe, *Exod.* 32. 16. where note, that the Scripture is the Word of God, *John* 10.35.

Sixthly, they have Royal Apparel, a Royal presence, and belong to a Royal City: and when they go in with Christ, they shall be on the Throne-Royal, and have the Crown-Royal.

It cannot be denied, but that they are set apart for God, and fitted for his Presence,

Psal.

Psal. 4. 3. *God hath set apart the man that is godly for himself.* Mirè segregavit cum indicio excellentiæ, (*saith one upon the Place*) God hath gloriously, wonderfully, miraculously separated to himself the godly man. Here Note,

That we do not make our selves fit, or meet for Heaven, God must do it. *Who can make his heart clean?* we may wash the out-side of the Cup, God must cleanse that which is within, *viz.* the heart, from wickedness. *I am the Lord that healeth thee.*

Christians are made fit by Redemption, by Vocation, by Adoption, by Justification, by Sanctification.

This should cause the godly to wonder at the Power of Divine Grace. If a King cast his favour on a mean subject or slave, and prefer him to a great and honourable Office, yet he cannot change his nature, and give him fitness for that place: But God doth not only give a Kingdom to his Saints, but inwardly adapt, and fit them for that Kingdom. And as none had right to the Land of *Canaan* but the *Israelites*, so none have right to Heaven but the Saints; (but of this more afterwards).

SECT.

SECT. II.

Secondly, *This Readiness is in the day and time of Life, not after death. Oh that thou hadst known in this thy day* (said Christ to the Jewes) *the things that belong to thy peace.* There is a time known and appointed of God, after which they shall never repent and be converted, who have enjoyed and lived under the means of grace, and are not converted. 'Tis true, the eternal God is not limited to any term or means. but man is limited to time and means. Sinner, thou hast a great work to do, a long journey to go, and many and mighty adversaries to divert and hinder thee; thy VVork is to prepare for Death and Judgment, which is very near; thy Voyage or Journey is to the everlasting VVorld, Provision must be made while in the way. To apply this a little, and to quicken you to husband the precious Talent of Time in order to Eternity. I shall propose three things; First, consider how short and uncertain our being in the VVorld is. Secondly, as life is short, so the continuance of the means of grace will not be long. Thirdly, when gray haires, old age, sickness, (*Solomons*

evil

evil day) comes, that is not so fit and proper a season to prepare for Heaven. First, remember how short and uncertain thy being in the VVorld is; *Our life is but a vapour*, Jam. 4. 14. that soon appeareth and disappeareth, dispersed assoon as raised. 'Tis a little spot of time between two Eternities. One of the Ancients doubteth, whether to call it a dying life, or a living-death: And if our life (which is a breathing death) had bin less then a vapour, it had bin nothing at all. The Psalmist describes Man as *Grass*, Psal. 90. *In the Morning it flourisheth, in the Evening it is cut down, and withereth.*

Man continueth but a very short time, his life is but a span long, or but a day long, like *Jonah*'s Gourd, came up in a night, and perished in a night. The first step man sets upon the stage of this VVorld, he is going out of the VVorld. The Naturalists speak of a Fly they call *Ephemeron*, a creature of one day, which cometh forth in the Morning, is very active about Noon, but when the Sun declineth, it declineth too, and sets with the setting of the Sun.

Man is an *Ephemeron*, a creature of one day. The Ancient of days sets up our Glass in Heaven, there it is running, and we see not how

how it haſtens to an end. Think, O devout ſoul, of the fugacity and ſwiftneſs of thy time here below, the Line and Leaſe of Life will quickly be out: It is but a point of time that we live, while we do but turn, Immortality is preſent. This preſent Life is but the place of our Inne and Sepulchre; The Beginning of this Life is but the *Exordium* of Death, *Vitæ hujus Principium ſtatim Mortis eſt Exordium.* We are carried every moment of time to the *End of Time.* Our Life is but like one ſailing; he who doth ſail, whether he ſtand or ſit, whether he ſleep, watch or walk, he is carried nearer the Port; may we not ſay with old *Jacob*, Gen. 47. 9. *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been*: where we have his Account caſt up; God is the great Landlord of our time, the Leaſe is for life, not years but days, not many days but few. *Life* (ſaid one) *is a Roſe, which if we view in its growth the Cold nips it, the Heat withers it, the Wind ſhakes it, be it never ſo fair it withers*: Another ſaith, *Life is a counterfeit, what if the Colours be fair, and the Reſemblance near, the Shadows of Death, and the Curtains of the Grave will darken all*; 'Tis a Play, We enter at our Birth, and Act all our Life, preſently there is an Exit, or end,

and

and away we go. One being asked what was Life, he shews himself a little, and hides himself again, his meaning was this, Our Life is but a little shew, no sooner are we seen, but immediately we are hid and gone. O sleepy and secure sinner, think of the certainty of Death, the danger of thy Soul, the nearness and length of Eternity, and the Necessity of preparing in a moment of time for an everlasting estate. Die and leave the VVorld we must, in the Grave there is no work, after Death the Judgement, *Heb.*9.27. Sin poisons the Arrow in the Quiver of the King of Terrours, and puts the Sythe into Deaths hand that cuts us down. Methinks Sin speaks to the several Generations of men whom Death hath conquered, as *David* to the Priest who had escaped *Sauls* bloody sword, *I have been the occasion of all this.* Sin and Death are coupled together, *Rom.*8.2.

Secondly, as Life is short, so the continuance of the means of Grace will not be long. There are many faithful, able, painful Ministers have Preached their last; and an abundance, yea, multitudes of Sinners, time-lo'ers, that have heard their last; and this will be my case and yours in a little time. The Prophets, do they live for ever?

We

We have but a little time to intreat and to treat with you about your souls, to call, invite and perswade you to come to Christ, and accept of mercy: and which Minister or Sermon shall be the last thou shalt hear, who can tell? *There are six days*, said the Master of the Synagogue, *Luke* 13. *in which men ought to work, in them therefore come and be healed. We must seek the Lord while he may be found*, Isa. 55. 6. *For behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 1. Moreover, as the Ministry and outward means is uncertain, so the time of the Spirits working with the Word is uncertain. *My Spirit shall not always strive with man*: the Spirit is compared to the Wind, who can tell when the Wind will blow, and how long it will continue its sweet gales to convey us to glory. The Door of grace is yet open to lost and undone sinners, who have slighted mercy. God did not deal so with the Angels that fell, they sinned, and the Lord cast them down, and shut the Gate of Glory upon them immediately. But the day for the things of thy peace is continued. Its said, the Devil is busie because his time is short, *Rev.* 12. 12. And shall we be worse then the Devil. The time is short, 1 *Cor.* 7. 27. *The Angel will*

ere

ere long swear by him that liveth that time shall be no more. You that are travelling towards Heaven must make haste, the Workman that sets a time for his task, listens to the Clock, and counts the houres. We have a great task and a short time, redeem it in order to Eternity. This is Gods houre, and this is mine; what I do for my dear soul, what I lay up for Eternity must be now done or never. O remember, its but an houre, but a day, and this will quickly pass away. In what anguish of soul, despair and torment, will many wish for those houres again? the loss of so many opportunities for the gaining of Heaven, will be as so many drops of gall and poison in thy bosom. *It makes me weep,* said one, *when my Hour-Glass is beside me, to see every speck of sand to follow other so speedily;* therefore the Apostle exhorts *to Redeem time; I must work,* said our dear Lord, *while it is day,* John 9.4. Sinner, if Death should come, and find thee unready, thou art undone soul and body for ever.

The time of gray Hairs, old Age, Sickness, is not the fittest season to prepare for Heaven. When thou comest to a Bed of Languishing, and thy strength wasted, thy breath short, and thou think to Cough-up, *Lord have mercy*

upon my soul, and that will be sufficient to prepare thee for Christ, and bring thee to Heaven. Besides, it is almost a wonder to hear of any one converted to God at the last gasp, when men are ready to enter into the Gulf of Eternity. In the Word we have one only instance of the Thief upon the Crosse, but remember his Conversion was one of the Wonders of Christs Passion; when Christ was on the Crosse, the Sun was darkned from the sixth houre to the ninth houre, the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain, the Earth did quake, the Rocks rent, the Graves opened, the Bodies of Saints which slept arose, and a notorious sinner was converted, all which is wonderful. *Austin* being sent to give his judgement of one that had delayed, and put off his repentance, returned this Answer, *Non dico damnabitur, non dico salvabitur*, I do not say he shall be damned, I do not say he shall be saved, but repent while it is well; Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation may depend upon this day. *Tamerlane*, when he laid siege to a City or Fort, first Erected a white Flag, thereby offering Peace; the second a Red, to signify blood; thirdly, he shewed them a black Engine, denoting devastation and destruction: The Holy Ghost saith, *To day if*

you

you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. There was one resolved to kill *Julius Cæsar* such a day, the Night before a Friend sent him a Letter to acquaint him with it, but being at supper and busie, *I will not look upon it now*, (saith he) *to morrow is a new day*: The next day when he should have read the Letter he was stabbed. God sends thee a Letter, a Message from Heaven. *To day hear his voice*, to day repent and leave thy sins, or for ever to Hell.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, *Let us now enquire what this Preparation to join with Christ is.* And I wish that all who read this Discourse may understand it, not onely notionally and speculatively, but also heartily and experimentally.

In Answer to this third particular, here is something Negatively, and something Positively, and both in reference to believers and unbelievers.

Negatively, Preparation for Christ and Heaven doth not lie or consist in any thing that is natural, or acquired by mans utmost industry. Let the Qualifications, Endowments and Attainments of men be never so rare and excellent, while

without

without supernatural regenerating grace, they cannot be fit and prepared for immediate and eternal fellowship with God. To explicate this, take these four Particulars.

First, Readiness for Christ and Heaven doth not consist in being Virgins, i. e. Church-Members, and in having the specious leaves of Profession. There are more then a few who pretend to and profess the true Religion, that are carnal, rotten and false in that Religion: All in the visible Church, that are sealed with the Sign and Sacrament of Initiation, are not made fit for divine Communion. *Nicodemus* was circumcised, yet not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. *Judas* was an Apostle and Preacher, but the son of perdition: *Simon Magus* was baptized, and in the gall of bitterness.

Many think, 'tis sufficient to save them, that they were born in *England*, and descended of Religious or Protestant Parents, that they keep their Church, say their Prayers, receive the Lords Supper, and procure their absolution when dying: The unbelieving *Jews* gloried in their External Rites and Priviledges, crying out, *The Temple of the Lord*: and because they had their

Priests, and Sacrifices and could go up to *Jerusalem* to worship, they were (as they thought) the happiest people in the whole world. How many Atheists and haters of God and Holiness, have been Baptized? Rest not here; for he is not a *Jew* that is one outwardly, *Rom.* 2 28. *Gal.* 6. 13. God calls the Circumcised *Israelites Kine of* Bashan, *and the Children of the* Ethiopian, *Am.* 4. 1. 9. 7.

2. Neither doth it consist in trimming of *Lamps*, *i. e.* in External duties and Religious Acts, which to the view of the world may be splendid and very plausible. *Bona opera non faciunt bonum virum, sed vir bonus facit opera bona. Luther.* Good works do not make a good man, but a good man makes good works. Unregenerate men their services proceed from the same principle that their sins do. The Tree must be good before the fruit can be good, the outside of the cup or platter may be clean; men may hear the word gladly, so did *Herod*, and pray frequently, so did the *Pharisees*, and those Hypocrites, *Isaiah* 58. Men may receive the Lords Supper, so did *Judas*, and do much more, and yet be far from the Kingdom of heaven: Moreover

over they may be exact in their second table duties, wrong no man, be just and Righteous, give unto *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsars*, (so were some of the Heathen) and yet be strangers to God, the new Birth, Union and Communion with Christ, without which no man can be capacitated, and prepared for the divine presence.

3ly, Neither doth this readiness for Christ lie in being of such a party, and opinion or in being hot and zealous for such modes and forms of Religion and Worship: A man may be Episcopal, a Presbyterian, an Independent, an Anabaptist, and a stranger to the life and power of Religion. The *Jews*, High Priests, and Elders: the Scribes and Pharisees were zealous for *Moses* Law, the Custom and Traditions of their Fathers. but the worst Enemies Christ had. The Prelate of *Rome* sticks not to impose on and Depose Princes, and their bloody deluded Vassals can murder & shed the blood of *Protestants* out of cruel religious zeal.

4ly, Neither doth it lie in mental Illumination and excellent rare parts, gifts, common grace, and good opinion, and approbation of the best, most serious and judicious men; A Mans Mind and In-

tellectuals may be Adorned with rare Notions. He may be able to dispute most readily, accurately and profoundly about Theological principles, he may Pray and Preach like an Angel, & be in high esteem in the Church, and yet have nothing in him to Intitle him to Christ, and prepare him for heaven. There is shining dross and counterfeit Silver which deceiveth many, as a *Bristol*-Stone may shew and shine like a Diamond, and a Counter like piece of Gold; the Picture of a man may be like a man, and Artificial Flowers are as fair, and look like Natural Flowers; so common grace hath the resemblance of saving Grace; So that some question whether it differs in Specie or degrees only. There are partial and almost Christians, who seem to bid fair for Christ and Heaven, as *Judas*, *Demas*, and many others. And who can tell how high and eminent men may be in office and profession, how sound and orthodox in Judgment and opinion, how deep in Conviction and Contrition, how regular in Conversation, how zealous, and warm in Affection, how forward in duties of Piety and Charity, and ready to suffer, how lifted up with airy titilla-

tillations of Joy, sips and tasts of comfort resulting from thoughts of free grace, and misapplying the promises, and the superficial transient operations of the Spirit; And but halve it with God, and fall short of Heaven: How much alike were these Virgins (to say nothing of their Agreement in number and name) they were all in society, they were all asleep, they were all awakened and rowsed up, they all went to work and trim'd their Lamps, they all went out to meet the Bridegroom: and the foolish came to the door with *Lord, Lord, open to us*: If good words, and wishes, and *O let me die the Death of the Righteous* will save men, they would all go to heaven. Many spin small, and make hypocrisie seem a good Web, and go through the Market as Saints among men; and yet steal quietly to hell without Observation: *So easie it is to deceive men* (said an eminent Divine) *'Tis doleful to think, and see such Troops and Droves of prophane, ignorant, presumptuous men and women, go down merrily to hell, with a golden dream and hope of Heaven*: Like the Fish that sport and play in *Jordan*, and then fall into the dead Sea; like *Haman* that went chearfully to *Hesters* Banquet, not

knowing his life was the mark that she Aim'd at: How many secure souls asleep in sin go out of the world, and never awake till they come to hell.

Having spoken something in the Negative concerning this fitness and readiness for Christ. I proceed now to the positive part of my Answer, wherein it doth consist.

1. There is an initial, or an habitual readiness for heaven, and there is also a more actual fitness to go in with Christ.

As soon as a man is taken out of his natural soil, and the seed of God is sown in his heart, he is habitually ready for his future happiness. If a Beliver should die the first day of his Conversion, he would certainly go to Heaven, witness the Thief upon the Cross. But truly there are many dear Children of God not actually prepared, because their spiritual estate is not so well setled. 'Tis a great duty for all that are espoused to Christ, to be in a constant and continual readiness to meet Christ, and have immediate Communion with him: but sad experience proves it is not so. A Woman may be espoused to another, and yet she may be sometimes not ready to meet him; her Ornaments may

be

be off, and her foul apparel on. To Reſolve this I ſhall ſhew.

Firſt, when the Chriſtian is not ready.

Secondly, when he is actually ready.

Firſt, when the Believers ſoul, like *Hizekiah*'s Sun, is gone ſome degrees backward, *i. e.* under remarkable declinings; And the beſt things in him are ready to die, *viz.* grace, inward joy, peace, old experiences, godly ſorrow are ready to die. If the firſt warm, burning, flaming love of the Eſpouſals be leſſned, and much abated towards Chriſt, ſo that the Mans heart doth vigorouſly go forth after ſenſual Objects, and the dead child is put in the place of the living child; is he fit to go in with Chriſt? If Grace be under remarkable decays and witherings, and the Souls Beauty departed, Can a Man then welcome Chriſt? What cauſe have thouſands to cry out with the Prophet, *My leanneſs, my leanneſs:* Is it not Autumn or Winter in many a ſoul? How little life and love have you, and much ado to maintain it. I heard a good Woman, in a diſpairing condition, complain of want of natural affection to her Husband and Children. And may we not with holy *Bradford* weep for want of love to

2. 22. How many strong and perillous Temptations are incident to youth? there is no such glassy slippery Piece of way between you and Heaven as Youth. Beware, saith a Divine, of this green young-Devil, the hot and fiery passions of Youth. That true Father in God, *John*, writes to young men who were Believers betimes. Youth and Grace, Christ and a young Man or a young Woman are a sweet Couple (saith the same Author.) Old *Jacob* commanded his Sons to carry down to *Joseph* the best Fruits of the Land of *Canaan*, *Gen.* 43. 11. This Primrose or Spring-Flower of Grace and Vertue, will be very grateful to sweet Jesus. Young Men and young Women hearken to the advice of him who knew by sweet experience how good it was to begin with God early, *Eccles.* 12. *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. The Kingdom of Heaven* (saith Christ) *is like a man that is an Householder, which went out early to hire Labourers into his Vineyard*, Mat. 22. 1. Will you in the *Aurora* or Golden-Morning of your Youth, go about your Masters Work, or rather your own? Mine Offering are for a sweet savour unto me (saith the Lord;) ye shall

observe

observe to offer in their season. The young Bullock, and Lambs of the first year are for the Lord, *Numb.* 28. The godly Child mentioned in the little Book, when it saw the Tokens of Death on it, cried out, I am mark't, death was welcome to it, being mark't for Christ, and ready for Heaven. Thou hast promised to be the Lords before this day, and a free-will offering vowed was not to be released, *Numb.* 30. The Daughters of *Zelophehad* (being young Virgins) sued for an Inheritance among their Brethren (*viz.*) to have a Lot in the Holy Land. Do you seek for an Inheritance among Believers, in the better Country? Heaven is before you, and God bids you, as once *Abraham* and *Lot*, to make your choice; he expects it, who will requite your youthful kindness, *Jer.* 2. 12. No Wife to the Wife of the Youth. In the Morning resolve to sow the seed of Vertue, and thou shalt reap. *Sanctifie to me the First-born, saith the Lord.* Deal by the Soul as *Hannah* did with her Son, who gave him to the Lord. 'Tis the best time for such a designation; and if thou dost intend Heaven, remember who saith, *My Son give me thy heart*, Prov. 2.

26.

16. Be holy and thou shalt be accepted. Sinner, thou canst not make too much hast to Heaven. When did you hear a young woman being Espoused to a Person, comely, rich, wise and honourable, say, It was too soon for such an Advantage. Let this day be thy Marriage-day; Marriage is honourable, especially this Marriage, it being to the Kings Son and Heir of Heaven. And if none have been converted that heard these Sermons. O that you that read them may be the First-fruits, *Exod.* 34. 26. *Micah* 7. 1. *Rom.* 15. 5. It hath bin and is the best sight in *England*, and in our Assemblies, to see so many young faces towards Heaven, ready to go in with Christ. To perswade you to bestow the dew of your Youth on Christ, and that your resolution for heaven may as a mighty torrent carry down all before it,

Take these Incentives,

1. The Church is called a Virgin, Christ the Bridegroom, and the flourishing Age of Youth must be the best time to make this Match. The Birds chuse their Mates in the Spring; the young Bees, when thrust out by the old Ones, work in the Summer for Honey in the Winter. The Mar-

riage

riages of the Aged, when Men should think of a Grave, are wondred at; and somewhat rare. Sinner, the time of Youth is the choicest and fittest season for thy Soul. Now, thine affections, *viz.* Desire, Love, Joy, Delight, (the wings and feet of thy soul, to carry thee to the arms and bosom of Christ) are ripe and flourish. While thy Love is warm, strong, and all thy senses and faculties quick, lively, active, place them on sweet Jesus. Timousness or Priority we must have ever respect unto in this grand Affair; as the Woman came to Christs Grave early, *Luke* 24. 1. so early must we get Grace. How excellent is it for a young Man, or Maid, to have such a spring of Grace as to invite Christ to come and dwell with him, *Cant.* 4. *ult.* The Owner of the Garden delights to see the young Plants Bud, Blossom, and bear fruit, *Cant.* 6. 11. To trade with God for the Oil of Grace, and to prepare for Heaven early, is the richest Trade in the World. Say with him who was pious in his Youth, and could tell what God had done for his soul, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee,* Psal. 63. 1. 73. 25. Do as the Primitive

Primitive Christians, who gave themselves to the Lord, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. It may be thou art poor in the World, and hast not Gold Frankincense and Myrrh to offer unto thy God, nor a thousand Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oil, yet thou hast an Heart which is a Present for a Prince, a Gift for the Great God. *Lord, such as I have I give thee*; and 'tis thine own, my body and my soul I resign to thee, *Rom.* 12. 1. This is the Male; do not bring the blind, the lame, and the maimed, lest he say to thee, as to those sacrilegious Persons, *Go offer it to thy Governour, see whether he will accept of it*; where thou hast spent the best of thy Floure, bestow thy Bran. Let the World, Flesh and Devil, that have had thy Youth, have the snuffs and dregs of old Age too. Sinner, stay till old Age, and no thanks to part with thy sins; sin will leave thee; when the Oil is wasted the Lamp will go out. Then stand forth young man, and say to God as *Ahab* to *Benhabad*, *I am thine and all that I have.* My head and my heart is thine, my feet, and my hands, and all is thine. My heart is thine to love thee, my head is thine to plot for thee, my hands shall

work

work for thee, my feet shall go for thee, my tongue shall speak to thee and for thee. If I had a thousand hearts, Lord, thou shouldst have them all. This is to honour him with thy First-fruits, *Prov.* 3. 9. *James* 1. 16.

2. Break off from the Devil and Sin early, and gather up this heavenly hidden *Mannah* of Divine Grace in the Morning, and go forward, and thou wilt be a Mother in *Israel*, or a Father in Gods Family. The new born Babe, will come to be a young man, and a young man a Father. The hot fiery Lust of Youth is the Devil in his Flowers, (saith one) in Youth the Devil finds dry Sticks, and dry Coals, and an Hearth Stone, and how soon can he with his Flint cast fire, and with his Bellows blow it up and fire the House. Therefore get Grace betimes into the Garrison of thy heart, that thou mayest be able to repel his hellish temptations. 'Tis Christs delights to be early in the Vineyard, *Cant.* 7. 12. Trees that Blossom in the Spring, are most fruitful and most useful. God made choice of the *Almond*-Tree ('tis said) because it

Blossomed first. When the Image of Heaven is stampt early upon a mans soul, such ordinarily attain great eminency in Grace and Holiness, *Moses*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Daniel*, *Timothy*, began with God betime, and were in the upper Form in Gods School, and Stars of the first Magnitude. *Obadiah* feared the Lord from his youth, and how useful was he? *First Seek the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matth. 6. 33. 'Tis an honour to be first in Christ, and first converted in a Town or Family. But to be the first Drunkard, the first Adulterer, the first Persecutor, or the first Inventer of fantastick, disguised Fashions, and wicked Practices, deserves to be branded with infamy and reproach. Seniority or Priority in the faith and true Piety, is a praise, *Rom.* 6. 5. *Salute* Andronicus *and* Junia *who are of Note*, (saith *Paul*) and *were in Christ before me*. Whereas to be a young Sabbath-breaker, a young Fornicator, a young Thief, a young Atheist, is a horrible shame and ignominy. On the contrary, to be first in Gods fear and favour, and to have early experience of Christs Love, is both commendable and comfortable.

3. Del-

3. Delay is the sad Character of the wicked Servant, and very deceitful and dangerous for thy Soul, *Matth.* 24. 48. To linger and procraftinate in a matter of this moment, is a trick and cheat of the Old Serpent to undo thee for ever. *To day*, to day, saith the great Landlord and Limitter of our time. To morow, hereafter, (saith the Devil) to whose voice, Sinner, wilt thou listen, to God, or the Devil? *Haste, for thy life, stay not*, said the Angel to *Lot*; if he had stayed a little longer he had been burn'd. Will you by delays please the Devil, and make whips and stings for your selves, treasure up wrath, this is to add to the Heap, and bring fewel to the fire, that must burn upon thee to Eternity. But what need such haste? the Thief went from the Cross to the Crown the same day. Do not trust to that, it was but one Thief, and he a Prodigy, and truly penitent. Suppose God should say to thee that art young, as once *Joseph* to his Brethren, *Except your younger Brother come with you, ye shall not see my Face*; If thou dost not serve, fear and obey me in thy youth, thou shalt never obtain my favour. Trees that Blossom not till *Autumn*,

afford little Fruit. The Inhabitants of *China* marry their Children very young, to prevent their Debauchery. I will not say of the hoary-Head, there is no hope, because some few in the Evening, or seventh hour, have been called and come to Christ: But with fear and trembling, consider, thou that sayst to day it is too soon, to morrow may with anguish of soul cry out it is too late. 'Tis good for a man to bear the Yoke in his Youth, *i. e.* Christs Yoke, not the Devils Yoke, whose Slaves and Drudges he will make you, until he damn you. What a grief is it, that youthful sins and old bones should meet in the Grave, *Job* 28. 11.

4. Divine Precepts and Promises are to the present time, none for hereafter. The Imperative Mood hath no Future Tense. Seeking out of season hath had no success. While *Esau* was hunting, he lost the blessing. *Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. While they went to buy the Bridegroom came, seek the Lord while he may be found*, Isa. 55. 7. Prov. 8. 17. Are not the shadows of the evening stretched out over some of you? Gray hairs are here and there, they will tell you the night

night is near: Look up you old and young Loyterers, and see whether your Morning-Sun is not past its Meridian, yea, near its setting. Dost thou not see many young men die, and go before thee to the Grave? Art thou certain of another day? Will not God reckon with thee for so rich a Talent, and treasure of time put into thy hand? What meanest thou, O sluggard, O sleeper, awake, arise, pray, prepare, that thou perish not. Thy Lord intends to come, how wilt thou fear and tremble to look him in the Face, and thy work not done? Sinner, go home and mourn over this great and irreparable loss, the loss of thy precious time. And now before death draweth the black shade over thee, set all things at rights betwixt God and thy soul. And if thy soul and heaven depend upon an inch of time, do not waste it for a World.

5. To know, fear, love and serve God in our Youth, is the best comfort of Old Age. A young Saint, and an old Angel; is a true saying.

Here I subjoyn Motives for Saints and

ſinners to prepare; and means and directions in order to it.

1. *Mo.* Conſider with greateſt ſeriouſneſs the ſure paſſing excellency, dignity, and glory of the Perſon, for whoſe ſweet and delightful preſence thou muſt prepare. Here I am at a loſs, and know not how to think, ſpeak, or write of this infinite, matchleſs, and tranſcendent beauty and glory of Chriſt. Which will keep all created tongues of Men and Angels in exerciſe and buſie, night and day to ſpeak of it. Now if you would have a Glimpſe of this glorious One, view his Titles, and hear what a true Character they give of him, who have ſeen him, not face to face, but through a Glaſs darkly. Chriſtians, you are invited to ſee this King, and Son of the higheſt in his Glory, *Cant.* 3. 11. *Go ye forth, O ye Daughters of* Zion, *and behold King* Solomon, *with the Crown wherewith his Mother crowned him, in the day of his Eſpouſals.* Chriſt appeared to *John* in wonderful Luſtre and Majeſty, cloathed with a Garment down to the ground, girt with a golden Girdle, his Head and his Hair white as ſnow, his Eyes as a flame of Fire, his Countenance as the

Sun

Sun ſhining in his ſtrength, *Rev.* 1. 13, 14. O what a fair One, what an only One, what an excellent, lovely, raviſhing One is Chriſt! Put the beauty of ten thouſand Worlds of Paradices, like the Garden of *Eden*, put all Trees, all Flowers, all Smells, all Colours, all Taſts, all Joys, all Sweetneſs, all Lovelineſs in one, O what a fair excellent thing would it be! and yet it ſhould be leſs to the deareſt and faireſt, beloved, then one drop of rain to the whole Sea, Lakes, Rivers and Fountains of ten thouſand Earths, (ſaith a famous Divine). The Church, who had the moſt acquaintance with this King of Glory, affirms, *He is altogether lovely*, Cant. 5. 10. And do you expect his Company and Preſence in Heaven, and not prepare? If a man be to eat with the Ruler, he will make himſelf ready. *Joſeph* ſhaved himſelf, and put off his Priſon-garments when he was to appear in *Pharoahs* Preſence. Is it fit Swine ſhould come into a Kings Preſence-Chamber? The Maids that went into *Ahaſuerus* were for ſix Months to be purified with Oil of Myrrh, and ſweet Odors; Art thou a filthy Swine, or Goat, and durſt come before the King of

Glory. *His Wife hath made her self ready*, Rev. 19. 7, 8. Friend, doſt thou love, and look for Chriſt, and pleaſe thy ſelf with the thoughts of ſeeing of him, and not caſt off thy ſins as a menſtruous Cloth? *Peter* expreſſeth his love to his Lord, by profeſſing he was not only ready to go to Priſon, but to die for his ſake, *Luke* 22. 33. Was *Peter* and *Paul* ready to ſuffer and die for Chriſt, and will you not make ready to live and reign with Chriſt, in heaven for ever.

---

2. *Mo.* The red Dragon and Old Serpent the Devil, that deſigns thy Eternal woe. Makes it his main buſineſs to hinder this work, therefore make ready. *Tobiah* and *Sanballat* were not ſo buſie to retard, and hinder the building of *Jeruſalem* and Temple, as the Devil is to hinder thy preparation for heaven. He hath his Devices, his Wiles, his Depths, and all imployed to impede and obſtruct this work. Here I ſhall endeavour to detect ſome of the ſtratagems of this active and malicious Adverſary the Devil.

Q. *How doth Satan hinder this Work?*

Anſw.

Answ. 1. By ſuggeſting delays and putting off our duty: and to this end he will perſwade,

1. Though it may and muſt be done, it is too ſoon, another ſeaſon is better then the preſent time.

2. That there is no life ſo ſweet as a life of ſin and ſenſuality.

3. That preparation for heaven is a ſhort and eaſie work, and may be done hereafter, or when we will. Sinner, if thou doſt think it eaſie to repent, believe, and change thy heart, and ſecure heaven at any time. Let me ask thee, Canſt make an other World, and keep the whole Laws? Canſt raiſe the dead, or live here for ever? Thou mayſt do one as well as the other.

2. By withdrawing men from the uſe of powerful and awaking means, in which they may meet with Chriſt and be converted.

3. By repreſenting the difficulty and impoſſibility of a ſtrict and pious life. To inſinuate and faſten this temptation, the Devil will make men believe,

1. That there is no abſolute neceſſity of ſuch preciſeneſs.

2. That men may live ill, and die well. Go in the way to Hell, and come to Heaven.

3. That no man can live such a life, if so, 'tis a sad, pensive life, and no way Eligible, or to be chosen.

4. By raising prejudice and evil thoughts in mens minds against the Preachers, and Professors of the Gospel: such as these:

1. That the best are not so good towards God, as they seem to the World, but false and counterfeit.

2. That thy sin is secret, and in corners, though not openly, and in the face of the Sun: And because of the grosser faults and miscarriage of some, and the weaknesses, infirmities, and passions of others, they will think well of none. Here note, 'tis a cursed design of Hell, to put bad men upon the profession of Religion on purpose to disgrace it, and render it odious to the World.

5. By abusing and misapplying the Doctrine of Election and Predestination, so as to infer and draw from it, wild and desperate conclusions.

6. By suggesting to poor desponding souls,

souls, that the day of Grace, and time of preparation for Heaven is over.

7. By corrupting and poysoning mens Judgments with heretical and damnable Opinions and Principles. There's many a mans head hath brought him to hell. To instance,

1. That Scripture is not of Divine Authority; That the World was from Eternity; That Religion is a meer Fiction; That Regeneration, Faith, Repentance, Communion with Christ is but moral vertue; That Men may be saved of any Religion; That Hell is a Bug-bear, and Heaven a Fools Paradise. But let God and his Word be true, and every Blasphemer a Liar.

8. By calming and quieting Mens Consciences with an out-side and carnal Religion, and good purposes.

9. By proposing false Grounds and Evidences for Heaven, *viz.* That Conviction and legal Terror is Conversion, that an honest, civil, sober life, without Christ and faith in him, will bring men to Heaven. These are the Fig-leaves Men sow together, who walk in the sparks and light of their own fire, *Isa.* 50.

10. By

10. By suggesting the numberless number of non-Professors, and these many of them honourable, rich, learned, wise men, and that it will be of dangerous consequence openly to own & practise Religion, and therefore they cannot prepare for Christ, and purchase Heaven at so dear a rate. Sinner, let me tell thee, whatever Satan doth make thee believe, thou hast no cause to take a Minute rest, while unready.

Mo. 3. There are multitudes of careless souls (as you have heard) asleep and secure, who will be sadly disappointed! tremble, lest it should be your case. *Woe to them that are at ease in* Zion. Carnal security, rising from self-ignorance, self-righteousness, and hope of future repentance, is a secret Enemy, like an Imposthume, never manifesting it self, but when immediately killing. In the great House of God the Church, are not only Vessels of Gold, but of Wood, Earth and Stone, *some to honour, and some to dishonour*; 2 Tim. 2. 20. There are who have not the title or name of Virgins, much less the nature. Some have not so much

much love to Christ and his Gospel as to profess it. They loath to be in company with the sincere Saints of Christ, neither will they take any pains for their immortal souls, but wholly neglect the performing of those duties, and gaining those Graces necessary for preparation. The Children of the great King, and Favourites of Heaven do make ready: let this be as a goad in your side to provoke and quicken you. The Vessels of the Temple for sacred use, were pure polished Vessels: Christians, you are designed to stand in Gods Presence, to see his Face, and lodge in his bosom to Eternity: therefore you must not love and follow whom you please. *The Kings Daughter is glorious within, and her Clothing is of wrought Gold, she shall be brought to the King in Rayment of Needle-work, and the Virgins her Companions follow her,* Psal. 45. 13, 14. Sons and Daughters must be received, when dogs and swine are shut out. *Hagar* and *Ishmael* are turned out, *Sarah* and *Isaac* stay in the Family. Now, sensual, secure sinner, whose example wilt thou follow? the Devils herd, or those instances and patterns of Piety that make ready?

1 Cor.

1 Cor. 11, 1. Phil. 3, 17. Great *Alexander* being asked, *Whether he would exercise himself in the* Olympian *Games?* Answered, *Yea, if I may run with Kings.* The Saints of the most high are honourable persons, and prepare and run with them for this Crown and Kingdom. *Here is the Race, above is the Crown,* said *Ignatius* the Martyr. *Run and get the Prize,* said Mr. *Bradford* to his Fellow-sufferers.

Mo. 4. Think upon the present, future, and unspeakable advantage of Preparation for Heaven; Get an assurance of going in with Christ to eternal fellowship, and you need not fear. No Man or Woman can possibly get above the dread of Death and Hell, without a well-grounded hope of Heaven. The thoughts of a sick-bed, and death, the last enemy, will be a stab to the soul unready. What tremblings and shiverings of heart, and perturbation of spirit, doth the thoughts of the Chambers of Death cause, till a man can say, 'Tis better for him to die then to live. When a man can reflect

upon

upon the Grace and Image of God in him, and ſees his title to Heaven clear, it will prevent Armies of fear, and Legions of doubts. *Now 'tis no more for me to die then to cloſe mine eyes*, ſaid a godly Miniſter. When a man carries his Evidences for Heaven in his heart and hand, he will be chearful, and content with a ſmall pittance of the World. A holy poor Woman, whoſe Fare was often but bread and water, ſaid, *She would not change her condition for the greateſt Lady in the Land.* Mr. *Jordan* of *Exeter*, (to excite his Neighbours to make ſure for Heaven) was wont to ſay, *Brown-bread and Kennel-water was good Fare, with an Aſſurance of Heaven.* When a Chriſtian conſiders what he hath is by Covenant with Chriſt, and be it more or leſs, 'tis for his good and beſt for him; How refreſhing and comfortable is a little? I might have bin wealthy and wicked, and eat the fat, drink the ſweet, and enjoy many outward comforts, and no Chriſt. I might have had a Farm, a Mannor, rich Apparel, delicate Fare, many Servants and Attendants, but Sins, Snares, and the Curſe of God on all, and at laſt have

gone

gone to Hell. Moreover, the Assurance of going in with Christ will deaden the heart to the World, and make a man willing to leave all for Christ; yea, it will reconcile a godly man to the sharpest Providences, and severest stroke of Gods Hand. It will make a Christian suffer willingly, and bear the Cross patiently and comfortably. When that great Sufferer look'd up to his exceeding eternal weight of Glory, his afflictions seemed light. The hope of Heaven will lighten and sweeten any Affliction, *Heb.* 10. 34. *Latimer* rejoyced when his Bishoprick was taken from him, Dr. *Taylor* leapt for joy when going to be burned, *If you lessen or abate any thing of my sufferings*, (said the Martyr) *it will be to my loss.* At *Stratford-Bowe* were burned in Queen *Maries* days, at one stake, a lame man and a blind man. The lame man, after he was chained, cast away his Crutch, bade the blind man, *Be of good comfort, for death would heal them both*; so they patiently suffered with a calm and sedate mind. Again, Preparation for Heaven will make a Man go singing in the way of the Lord, and cause our duties to flow from us like water

from

from a Fountain; and free-will offerings are always best and most grateful to God. In fine, due Preparation for going in with Christ, will be an effectual means to prevent that active adversary the Devil, who improves all opportunities and advantages against Gods poor people, especially their weaknesses, when they are brought low in body and mind too. 'Tis said of the natural Serpent, *Non nisi moriens in longam producitur*, he is never at his full length till dying. When a godly man is dying, the old Serpent shews himself, lets out his sting, but an Assurance of Gods favour will quench his fiery darts.

Mo. 5. Christs long absence, Gods unwearied patience, and all the calls, threatnings, warnings and alarms of the Word are, that men should make ready for him, and escape the wrath that is to come. Why are means and Ministers continued, and the offers of Grace by the Gospel renewed, but to bring Souls over unto Christ, and safe to Heaven? He sent forth other Servants, *Matth.* 22. The first in the Morning, others at the sixth, ninth and

eleventh

eleventh hour. Why is the Cry at midnight, but to raise and rouze up the sleepier Virgins to make Ready? There are four Cries God makes use on, to startle and awaken men to mind their souls business.

1. The first is, the cry or voice of the Spirit, which is a more secret and still voice to excite us unto our duty. The Holy Ghost saith, *To day, The Spirit saith, Come, Rev. 22.*

2. There is the cry of the Word. *This is as the Voice of the Trumpet,* Isa. 58. 1. *John the Baptist* was a Cryer. *Go and cry in the Ears of* Jerusalem, *said the Lord,* Jer. 2. 2.

3. There's the cry of the Rod. *The Lords Voice cried unto the City* Samaria, *Hos.*

4. There is also the cry of Conscience. All which serve to prompt us to our duty, and prepare us for Eternity. Christ had kindled the fire upon the Earth, and burnt it, and set up his Tribunal, and sounded the Trumpet of Judgment long before, but that he is willing to save undone sinners, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *His long-suffering to us-ward, is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance.*

Mara

Mora ſponſi pœnitentiæ tempus eſt.

The delay of the Bridegroom, is the time of repentance. There's not a Sabbath-day, nor a Sacrament-day, nor a Sermon-day, after the Judgment-day. Now God warns by his Judgments, waits to be gracious, calls by his Miniſters, ſtrives by his Spirit: and you may be welcome to him. And upon your Repentance, and cloſing with Chriſt, you ſhall be juſtified, pardoned, accepted, and taken into the marriage, and Crowned: But ſtay a little longer, and the Door is ſhut, and then all your prayers, cries, tears, will be fruitleſs. O ſinner, ariſe; make haſte and return unto the Lord before it be too late.

---

6. *Mo.* Chriſts coming will be certain, and you know not how ſoon, his Word is ſure. The ungodly Carnal World will be ſwallowed up, and drowned in ſenſuality before that day, as it was in the days of *Noah*, and many Profeſſors will be careleſs and ſecure: *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his Promiſe.* The pro-

promise to *Adam* of the Seed of the Woman, was many hundred years before Christs Incarnation, who in the fulness of time came. 'Tis now more then sixteen hundred years since his going in Triumph, from Earth to Heaven: And though he seemeth long or late before he comes, he will certainly come at last.

Q. *But to whom doth the coming of the Lord seem long?*

Answ. 1. Christs coming seems long to Atheistical mockers, who say, *Where is the Promise of his coming?* 2 Peter 3. 3. 4.

2. To his suffering Members. Their cry to Vindictive Justice is, *Lord, how long?* Psal. 94 3. *Revel.* 6. 10. If these dayes of sin and misery should not be shortned, no Flesh could be saved.

3. Christs coming is long to passionate Lovers, who prize his Presence, and long to see his Person: *Haste, my Beloved,* said the longing Spouse. But count upon it, he will not fail in coming. 'Tis the great Article of our Creed, *That Christ shall come to judge the quick and the*

the dead. Moreover, he told his tender-hearted, and dearly beloved Disciples, (who were sad at the tiding of his going from them) he would come and see them again. And he hath, according to his Promise, ever since sent another to supply his room, to teach, refresh and comfort them until he comes, and to keep the recent memory of him in their minds. He hath also once and again presented himself to the view of his suffering Saints, as ready to come and avenge their cause for them, *Acts* 7. 55. *Rev.* 1. 13, 18. And he hath often met them in his Ordinances, and holy Appointments, as an Answer of their holy Prayers; *He is come*, saith the Martyr; Many a token of his love, comfortable converse, and sweet meeting with Christ his Church hath had already, all which assures and tells us, that he will be with us in a little time, *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*, Heb. 10.

2. Quest. *But how will he come? and why will he come?*

Answ. First, He will come Personally.

Secondly,